FORTEAN TIMES

strange phenomena - curiosities - prodigies - portents - mysteries

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FORTEAN TIMES

A Contemporary Record of Strange Phenomena

FORTEAN TIMES is a non-profitmaking bimonthly miscellany of news, notes and references on current strange phenomena and related subjects. Formerly THE NEWS. Affiliated to the International Fortean Organisation (INFO) in continuing the work of CHARLES FORT (1874-1932). Edited and published by Robert JM Rickard. Asst Editor: Steve Moore. **PO BOX 152, LONDON N10 1EP, ENGLAND.**

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FEBRUARY 1977

We must apologise for the standard of some copies of the last issue - badly printed, collated and stapled. If you'd like your copy replaced please let us know.

With this issue we hope you'll note a lot of improvement - some of the thanks must go to Kay Thompson for her offer of typing part of each issue.

Truss Fund

In which we gratefully acknowledge the donations to our survival and growth fund, from: Kurt Lothmann, George Gati, SN Morgan, Peter Roberts, Roger Randall, Frank Satterthwaite, Anthony Smith, Stephen M Ward, and CA Worth.

Plans...

It may sound like a platitude but you really are important to us. TLH and FT exist for your information and participation - so we'll keep you informed of our planned partnership and growth.

Our own status has been one of small but steady growth - the annual intake of new subscriptions just keeping ahead of the lapsed. This has meant that we are operating at breakeven with no capital for growth. Hence our Truss Fund (see above) which provides this support - and we really must thank its supporters for their gifts (some of which have been very generous) - for without it we couldn't have got this far. If you can afford it, and think we deserve it, please send something to help us grow.

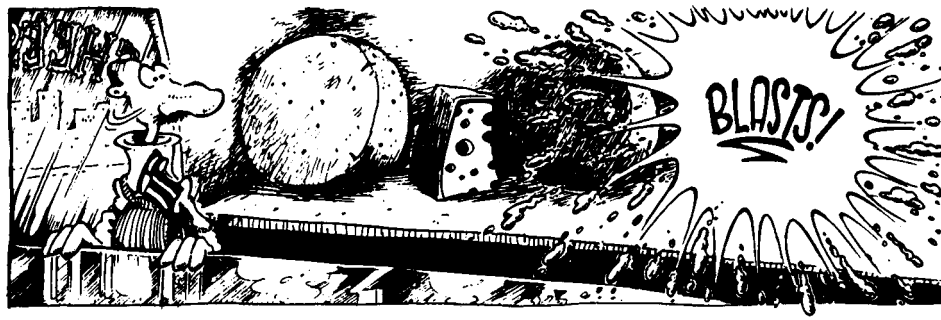
TLH and FT have prepared new blurbs and have taken a part share of a stand in the forthcoming Festival of Mind and Body (Olympia, 19-24 April) in the hope that we can attract more readers.

We hope this new intake will finance our next step - improved production and distribution. But events have a way of sneaking up and mugging the best of plans and in the wake of the recent increase in printing costs there is the spectre of a postal cost rise (after printing, our biggest single cost).

Our dilemma is that though FT is at a bargain price in the USA, an increase in the UK price would be counter-productive. The only other solution is for more readers to buffer us and amortise the costs better. Everyone can help. With this issue you'll receive a blurb - please use it to encourage a friend. If each of you brought in one new sub, we'd double overnight (almost).

Please give it a try.

/cont on p13.



January this year saw an astonishing series of mystery explosions in Britain. I say 'mystery' explosions because despite the attempts of investigating authorities, rightly outraged and inconvenienced public, parties with vested interests, the police and the firemen to pin the blame on our natural gas supply, the series seems to have been way beyond any normal expectation or reason. Faulty gas mains or gas appliances doubtless figured in some cases but as we shall see they can not account for them all.

I'll briefly list the salient details; the material is drawn from the daily and evening papers of the day or day after, being widely covered and easily available. I apologise for the imprecise dating of the early events but we were not collecting data then - the full realization of the series per se only becoming clear in the first days of the new year, whereas we can see some kind of run-up from the preceeding November.

November 1976 -- Sometime at the beginning of Nov there were two explosions on the same day, one demolished a house in Leeds, and the other damaged an old folks home in Keighley, both in Yorks. On the 15th a blast damaged a house in Hackney, London. Gas leaks blamed in each case, but no real evidence.

December 1976 -- Houses were damaged on the 16th at Ealing, London, and on the 18th at Chadsmore, Staffs; both blamed on gas mains leaks. On Christmas Day a gas heater exploded in a home in Kentish Town, London. In the following week, on the 29th, there was a huge explosion in a shopping-center in Bristol and in a house in Bradford, Yorks, on the same day; gas leaks blamed. On 30th shops in Brentford, Middlesex, blew up, again leaks were blamed. That night there was a gas-leak alert in the Regent's Park area of London, but nothing was found.

3 January 1977 -- shops exploded at Beckenham, Kent, and there were alerts in Odsal, Yorks, and Knightsbridge, London, after people thought they smelled gas. As gas-men were searching for a leak in a house at Sutton-in-Ashfield, Notts, it blew up (as if to confirm their suspicion).

4 January 1977 -- houses in Liverpool and Huddersfield, Lancs, were blasted, supposedly by mains leaks. Gas smelled in a street put Nottingham on an alert; and hundreds of gallons of whiskey blew sky high at a distillery in Renfrew, Clydeside.

5 January 1977 -- a gas cooker exploded in a home in Leytonstone, London; and in a curious coincidence two liquid gas cylinders blew up in separate incidents in Roberton, Lanarkshire, and in a fruit warehouse in Huddersfield.

6 January 1977 -- a leak alert in Boston, Lincs; and a house blows up in Islington, London, after gas-men call to fix a leak and install a new meter.

7 January 1977 -- a cafe at Newark, Notts, damaged by exploding gas cylinder only three days after gas-men fix a leak there. Two explosions in Edinburgh within an hour: one in the bakehouse of the Royal Infirmary when an oven pilot-light went out; and the other in the sugar-mill of Burton's biscuit factory at Sighthill, on the city's outskirts.

8 January 1977 -- the Bristol shopping center, scene of the blast in late December, closed down again because someone thought they smelled gas - nothing found.

9 January 1977 -- gas cylinder blows up at Kettering, Northants.

14 January 1977 -- explosion ruins house at Leeds, Yorks, as road-works team outside manage to break the mains. Bungalow in Tonbridge, Kent, damaged in blast supposedly caused by a mains leak. In Glasgow a gas cylinder rolls off a lorry and explodes in a street.

The rest of January 1977 -- another blast in Newark, Notts, this time in a block of flats as an old man fell and grabbed at a cooker which came away from the wall, on the 15th. On the 16th, another house in Leeds is explosively demolished. On the 17th, shops in Rother-

hithe, London, evacuated after gas is smelled. On the 22nd, four houses in Seaton Delaval, Northumberland, are damaged in an explosion, as was a house at Walsall, Staffs, on the 25th.

February 1977 -- the series of blasts is slowing down. The only ones we have a note of are an explosion in the center of Manchester on the 5th, thought to be the work of an incendiary; and a major evacuation of houses in Plaistow, London, after gas was smelled in a street.

Vaporings

The theory that raised most tempers was that the gas mains were at fault, having been baked during the drought in Summer of 1976 and now cracked during some of the bitterest nights for many years, and to make matters worse, Britain had shut down for a long Christmas holiday (over a week in some parts) which allowed the gas to accumulate. Like all plausible-sounding theories it looks impressive until you examine it. But some people were impressed and by the 6th Jan, Wedgewood Benn, the Energy Secretary, announced an inquiry. It was welcomed by the chairman of British Gas who was sure it would vindicate both his industry and product from "ill-informed and irresponsible" criticism. The in-fighting between all the public bodies involved is of no real concern to us here except that it is a familiar Fortean scenario - the Establishment falling into panic when confronted by the Unknown. The matter was summed up nicely by our inestimable friend John Rimmer (editor of MUFOB) in a letter of 6th January:

"It is interesting to watch the public reaction - there is an obvious fear of unstructured, random events, so all the explosions have to be put down to a single cause - the long Christmas holiday - a particularly good scapegoat, as it has itself turned into a 'moral-panic' with a great deal of guilt and self-flagellation about 'idle' British and 'industrious' Europeans...The Gas Board is catching the flak, and will probably fulfil the role of the USAF in the UFO mystery. An interesting confrontation on TV today between a Gas spokesman and someone from the National Safety Council who was amazingly irrational. It looked as though he would be satisfied with nothing less than an admission from the Gas Board that they were totally, personally responsible for all the bangs. The Gas Man, like the Blue Book people, tried to emphasise that each event had an individual cause, that there was no one explanation that would wrap the lot up - but he was practically shouted down by this Donald Keyhoe of the Safety Council. All the elements are there; we must now wait for the Condon...sorry, Benn Report."

We're still waiting! Meanwhile it may be worth noting some of the causes of explosions other than mains leaks. We've had explosions involving cylinders of both liquid petroleum and methane/butane, some standing still (powering commercial space heaters or domestic central heating) and one dropping off a lorry, and no one has yet explained how they managed to explode. We've had a tank of whiskey explode, and to date no cause has been officially given. We've had workmen bashing their diggers into the mains pipes; and falling old folk pulling cookers away from the wall. In the Brentford event (3 Jan) the manager of the exploding laundromat said he could not smell any gas when he closed the shop the night before, or when he reopened that fateful morning. My favourite is the explanation of the Edinburgh biscuit factory explosion (7 Jan) as the "spontaneous combustion of dust and air." You takes your pick! The fact is that we have had a curious series of explosions, many of unknown origin, far beyond any usual average!

Before moving to an allied phenomenon, we'd like to acknowledge the Ken Rogers information network for providing most of the source material on the blasts mentioned above. Credit is also due to the Bords, Mrs V Martin and Peter Rogerson.

Fires and other Disasters

Concurrent with the extraordinary series of explosions were a number of major public disasters, most of them involving fires usually of unknown origin. We include them here partly because they may have some close relationship to the blasts (both being violent expressions of some collective explosive spirit), and partly because it doesn't really matter where we use them since our overall thesis is that our categories are merely conveniences and that in reality all events must merge away into all other things.

We notice that Christmas Day seemed particularly disastrous: fire sunk an Egyptian ship carrying pilgrims back from Mecca; fire destroyed 30 homes in Bartlesville, Oklahoma; fire killed 13 people in Chicago; and fire damaged a club at Henley, Oxon, to the tune of £20,000. ((We also note that it was a bad day for Egyptians, apart from the pilgrim-ship disaster, an Egyptian 707 crashed in Thailand killing over 72 people. Sometimes the link between coincidences can be a country, as here. This reminds us of 10 September 1976 when a quake at Skopje in Jugoslavia was followed by 'the worst air collision in history' over Zagreb, killing

177. The next day the news reported that President Tito was seriously ill; a group of Serbo-Croats hijacked a plane and left a bomb in New York to draw attention to the plight of Croatians in Jugoslavia; and the international guerrilla, Carlos the Jackal, was reported to be planning nasty things to do in that country.))

On Boxing Day, 26 December 1976, a fire destroyed an old folks home at St John, Newfoundland, killing 20 inmates; and 6 died in a hotel blaze at Hamilton, Ontario.

On the 1st January 1977, 3 children died in a fire at Rochdale, Greater Manchester; and a school at Gravesend, Kent was extensively damaged by fire which appears to have begun in two separate parts of the afflicted building (a neat Fortean datum that), which makes the police suspect arson.

On the 2nd January, 3 girls died in a mystery fire at Wimbledon, London. Gas was thought to have leaked and ignited (shades of the concurrent mystery explosions) but no leak could be found. A girl died in a fire at her home in Hull, Yorks; and an elderly brother and sister died in a fire at Berrynarbor, near Ilfracombe, Devon.

On the 3rd January, a mystery fire gutted a home at Wellingborough, Northants (at noon!) killing a boy.

On the 5th January a bus crash injured 70 children at Rainworth, Notts; and a mystery fire destroyed a launderette (another one) and the flats above (another £20,000's worth). They arrested a young girl for this on suspected arson (another Fortean datum).

On the 9th January, 5 die in a housefire at Newton Aycliffe, Co Durham; and at West Bridgeford, Notts, 27 physically handicapped people were evacuated from a center for the handicapped because of a serious fire.

(Credit once more to Ken Rogers, Mrs Valerie Martin and the Bords.)

We note that most of these dates fill in gaps in our explosion list, or coincide with blasts; and seem to have mainly afflicted children and old folks.

HAMILTON'S AIRSHIP HOAX - KANSAS 1897

One of the most important stories in the UFO catechism is that of the airship that hovered over the Kansas farm of Alexander Hamilton, at 10.30 pm 19 April 1897, and dragged off one of his heifers. A neighbour later discovered the hide, legs and head of the calf (identified by Hamilton's brand) with no tracks on the soft ground or any clue to what could have happened to it (1). The story was profoundly valuable to the study of the airship-mode of UFO phenomena for two things: firstly Hamilton's apparently impeccable and detailed description of the incident and 'six of the strangest beings I ever saw' who manned (if you'll excuse the chauvinism) the craft; and secondly, the unequivocal link between the airship/UFO and the kidnapped and butchered calf preceeded (or initiated) a new category of UFO phenomena - those linked with mystery livestock mutilations, still going on today - and, because of our first point, lent this UFO connection great credibility. It is probably true to say that every writer in the field, from cautious sceptic to breathless uncritical advocate, has been impressed by the details of the story, the affidavit and other evidence of Hamilton's respected position in the community (2), and by the fact that the story has apparently been investigated and reported on many times without anyone finding any cracks. Oh, there have been those who've had their doubts alright, but there's been no evidence until now that the story was anything but true.

The person who unravelled the core of the hoax is Jerome Clark, now Associate Editor

of Fate, and he has his own summary of what happened in the February 1977 issue. The incident was frequently revived in Kansas papers as a wonderful relic of the old days, and Jerry, who had long been fascinated by the case, was prompted to trace any of Alexander Hamilton's relatives. Hamilton himself died in 1912, but Jerry located his granddaughter, Mrs Elizabeth Hamilton Linde (daughter of Hamilton's son Wallace who was with his father that day, according to the reports), who still lived in Yates Center, Kansas. Mrs Linde, 72, told Jerry that the family like to believe the story was true - they were familiar with the published accounts and credited Alex with a 'darn good imagination'. Although they had never heard Alex or Wall discuss the 'family legend' they had been told that the story was concocted by Alex and the editor of the Yates Center Farmers Advocate by several of Alex's contemporaries, a number of decades back when many of them were still alive.

The next piece of the jigsaw arrived fortuitously (3) - a clipping from the Buffalo Enterprise, 28 January 1943, an obscure Kansas weekly. The previous week the Yates Center News had re-run the calf-napping story and received a letter from Ben S Hudson, editor of the Fredonia Daily Herald, son of Ed. F Hudson, Alex's crony, the unnamed editor of the Farmer's Advocate. Ben said: 'Hamilton and father concocted that story following a Saturday afternoon pow-wow,' and included a statement from his father who had been amused by the story's persistence. The statement reads:

'I had just bought and installed a little gasoline engine, the first I believe to come to Yates Center, using it to run my machinery, replacing the hand-power on the old Country Campbell press and kicking the job presses. I invited many of my friends into the back shop to see the engine work. Hamilton was one of them. He exclaimed: "Now they can fly," hence the airship story that we made up. After we had published it, the story was copied in many of the largest newspapers in this country, England, France and Germany, some illustrating it with pen-drawn imaginations of their staff artists. There were also hundreds of inquiries from every part of the globe. Soon afterward there came the various experiments in flight. I have always maintained that Alex Hamilton was the real inventor of human flight. (Signed: Ed. F. Hudson)'

This claim to the scope of Hamilton's originality should perhaps be taken cautiously; Mr Hudson Senior's memory is probably dimmed by time, and by Ben's admission the Alexander Hamilton affair 'has been a great topic of conversation in our family since the event occurred.' The incident date puts it past the peak of the great airship flap of 1896/7, so the notion of airship encounters had certainly passed into the popular vocabulary.

I passed the above clipping onto Jerry, who admitted that he was very fond of the calfnapping story and would be sorry if it could be definitely proved a hoax. We still needed a piece of airtight evidence to link the testimony of Mrs Linde and Mr Hudson Senior. Jerry placed a letter in the Yates Center News (16 September 1976), asking for any further information on Hudson's claims - a simple step that paid off handsomely. He received a letter from Mrs Donna Steeby, of Wichita, Kansas, saying that her 93-year-old mother, Ethel L Shaw, heard the story from Alexander Hamilton himself (she was then Ethel Howard and a close friend of Alex's daughter Nell, Wallace's sister. There had been no social contact between Mrs Shaw and Mrs Linde.) In a second letter Mrs Steeby sent along her mother's statement:

'How well I remember that beautiful afternoon almost as though it were yesterday. I, as a young girl about 14 years old, was visiting in the Hamilton home with Mrs Hamilton and their daughter Nell, when Mr Hamilton came home from town, put up his team and came into the sitting room where we were visiting. He pulled up a chair and almost immediately began relating this story by saying: "Ma, I fixed up quite a story and told the boys in town and it will come out in the Advocate this weekend." He seemed quite elated over what he had done but Mrs Hamilton was rather shocked at what he told them and and at times would remark: "Oh, Alex," or "Why, Alex!" But it didn't disturb us girls as we felt it was just a fabricated story, yet I pondered a little over it as I walked along on my way home that evening. I told my parents about it but they gave it no concern, saying: "Pay no attention to it as it's just another of his stories." It seems there were a few men round about who had formed a club which they called 'Ananias' (Liar's Club). They would get together once in a while to see which one could tell the biggest story they'd concocted since their last meeting. Well, to my knowledge, the club soon broke up after the 'airship and cow' story. I guess that one topped them all and the Hamilton family went down in history.'(4)

Jerry asked Mrs Linde if she believed Mrs Shaw's statement. She seemed reluctant to give up belief in the entertaining

family legend, but said: 'If she says that's the way it was, that must be the way it was.'(5). Jerry, who has had some suggestions from other UFOlogists that this exposé is itself a hoax, summarises the position: 'It is extraordinarily improbable that Mrs Shaw and Mr Hudson should have lied about the matter. What could their possible motives be? One correspondent suggests it was to "clear the family name". As my wife comments: "Isn't it kind of late to do that now?" If that were the case, why should it be Mrs Shaw (with whom Mrs Linde has no social contact) and the late Mr Hudson who tried to do this - and not a direct descendant such as Mrs Linde, who apparently wants to believe in the "incident"? Moreover, what kind of attempt is it to "clear the family name" when its patriarch is revealed as a liar?'(5) To which we might add that there are too many individuals, too far apart, involved in this unmasking for there to be a hoax on our part (unless you're over the top and see conspiracies behind everything). We could also observe that Mr Hudson's statement has been on record since 1943, before some of us were born, and that there is no sign of any collusion between Hudson and the two ladies (Linde and Shaw), or that they even knew of Hudson's statement that 'the airship story was made up.'

UFO ANIMAL-NAPPINGS-1
Stolen Cow
WAY BACK IN 1897, RANCHER ALEX HAMILTON AND WITNESSES WERE ASTONISHED TO SEE ONE OF THEIR COWS HOISTED UP TO A UFO THAT THEN SAILED AWAY. DID THE UFONAUTS WANT TO EXAMINE EARTHLY LIVESTOCK. IF NOBODY KNOWS. (DATA FROM JOHN KEEL AND NORTH AMERICAN NEWSPAPER ALLIANCE)
TOMORROW—
DISAPPEARING DOGS

Hamilton's airship calf-napping has passed into the modern folklore of UFOlogy, and is believed to be true because of the pseudo-factual style of presentation in literature aimed at the mass-market. This panel appeared in USA newspapers (week of 26 Feb 1968) which ran Otto Binder's widely syndicated feature 'Our Space Age'. ((Our thanks to Page Research Library Newsletter for bringing this to our attention.))

As Jerry has found out, the reactions of some, who have a personal unshakeable faith in the story, have been predictably scornful - they feel they have something to lose when this airship is deflated. Perhaps they have - their faith would have been better placed, and less sorely tried, if they had believed in the quest for truth. In a letter to me (6) Jerry said he had told John Keel of this confirmation that the calfnapping was a hoax. John told him that now 'we are in real trouble. It always seemed to be the best of the 1897 incidents. If it collapses we can seriously question all the other cases.' We should be doing this anyway - but I guess that to make any progress at all we have to judge approximations to truth. This story fell at the first point - Hamilton, with impeccable credentials, loved a joke, and managed to get 10 of his friends, all officials of Le Roy and Yates Center, to sign the affidavit attesting to his veracity. The joke was on all of us who believed it (me included).

I personally feel that the case is still important because of the second of our points: whether the original incident actually happened or not, it was published as a true account and possibly thousands of people worldwide have since believed it actually took place. This *invests it with a phenomenal reality, and,* hoax or not, it conforms to a classical scenario, both ancient and modern, in myth and in fact, for animal kidnaps and mutilations. If you have been following developments in UFO studies in the last few years, you will realise that we are just beginning to appreciate that hoaxes are as much a part of the phenomenon as the actual cases. We must be on our guard - nor, in our zeal, must we throw the baby out with the bathwater.

References:

1)The main account, with an affidavit signed by 10 citizens, was in the Yates Center Farmer's Advocate 23 April 1897. Since then it has been quoted in virtually every major UFO book, the key ones being Jacques Vallee's Anatomy of a Phenomenon, 1965 (Spearman 1966, Tandem 1974) which quotes the entire clipping; John Keel's Operation Trojan Horse, 1970 (Abacus, 1973) Frank Edwards' Flying Saucers - Serious Business; Lore & Deneault's Mysteries of the Skies. Leading journal sources include Lucius Farish's article in Fate April 1966;

and Flying Saucer Review 12:4/12. The Leroy Reporter (Kansas) was reviving the story as late as 14 August 1970. Many thanks to Peter Rogerson, of MUFOB, for this potted bibliography.

2)For information on Hamilton's history and standing (he had been a member of the House of Representatives) see Lore and Deneault's Mysteries of the Skies.

3)Fortean Researcher Robert J Schadewald had written to the Kansas State Historical Society about the Hamilton story, and received by prompt return from the Assistant Librarian, Mrs V P Allbert, the clipping from the Buffalo Enterprise - 'so someone there was apparently familiar with the hoax,' wrote Bob, who sent it to me, and I forwarded it to Jerry. This clipping is reporting on the story as it developed in the Yates Center News.

4)Letters from Mrs Donna Steeby to Jerome Clark, 18 and 24 September 1976.

5)'Some Clarifications of the LeRoy, Kansas, Calfnapping Hoax.' - A privately circulated summary of the matter from Jerome Clark, 19 November 1976.

6)Letter to me from Jerome Clark, 2 October 1976.

Robert J M Rickard - February 1977

Next time in Forteana Corrigenda we review further developments in the unravelling of the disappearance of David Lang (see FT 18/6.)

Precession/Bell:
...cont from p17.
7) Flying Saucer Review 21: 6/14 (1976)
8) The Mothman Prophecies John A Keel 1975 (Visitors from Space Panther, 1976)
9) Fortean Times 17/20
10)UFOs: Operation Trojan Horse, John A Keel, 1970 (Abacus, 1973)
11)Beyond Earth Ralph & Judy Blum (Corgi 1974)
12)Fortean Times 16/19; 17/17
13)Our Haunted Planet John A Keel 1971 (Futura, 1975)
14)Gods or Spacemen? W R Drake (Amherst 1964)
15)The Coming of the Saucers? Kenneth Arnold & Raymond Palmer (Amherst 1952)
16)Invisible Horizons, V Gaddis (Ace 1965)
17)Destiny Mars & ET Databank on Phobos, M W Saunders (Downs, 1975/76)
18)The News 9/7
19)The News 4/7
20)G H Williamson, The Road in the Sky, 1959 (Futura 1975) & Secret Places of the Lion, 1958 (Futura 1974)
21)Gods and Spacemen in the Ancient East W R Drake 1968 (Sphere, 1973)

ZEBRADIA

THE WONDERHORSE OF HIBALDSTOW.

by NIGEL WATSON

On the 10th June 1976 a rather remarkable foal was born in Hibaldstow, South Humberside - remarkable because his appearance is more like a zebra than a horse.

Mr Bill Sargent, the owner of the foal, christened him 'Zebradia' for obvious reasons. "It's only once in a lifetime ought like this happens, I reckon. I've been breeding horses for years and I've never seen one like it. I've had coloured ones, black and white, blue and white, and lemon and white, but never one like that with stripes on," he said.

Zebradia's parents were a mare called 'Spotty', and a five-year-old stallion called 'Wheelgates Bill', a pure-bred Cleveland Bay, both owned by Mr Sargent.

Although one newspaper report (Scunthorpe Evening Telegraph 12 July 1976) claims that Zebradia's markings "have astonished veterinary experts," no thorough veterinary examination or report has yet been carried out.

Roger Hebb and myself visited Mr Sargent on 4 October 1976 and were able to see the foal for ourselves. Mr Sargent is the owner of an icecream business and an icecream parlour is situated next to his house and the stables. The combined attraction of icecream and the unusual horse meant the area was inundated with children, particularly at weekends. For the foal's sake (it developed a predilection for icecream) and for peace of

mind the foal is kept with his mother in a secluded field a few miles from Hibaldstow. We found Zebradia to be a particularly frisky varmint as we tried to photograph him in the failing light. The session was like sparring with Mohammed Ali! Surprisingly, the shots came out quite well.

Zebradia is still something of a celebrity in the area. In July the children of Class 10, Kirton Lindsey County Primary School, presented Mr Sargent with a book of paintings, stories and poems celebrating the wonder horse. We excerpt one here, by Jennifer Ashley.

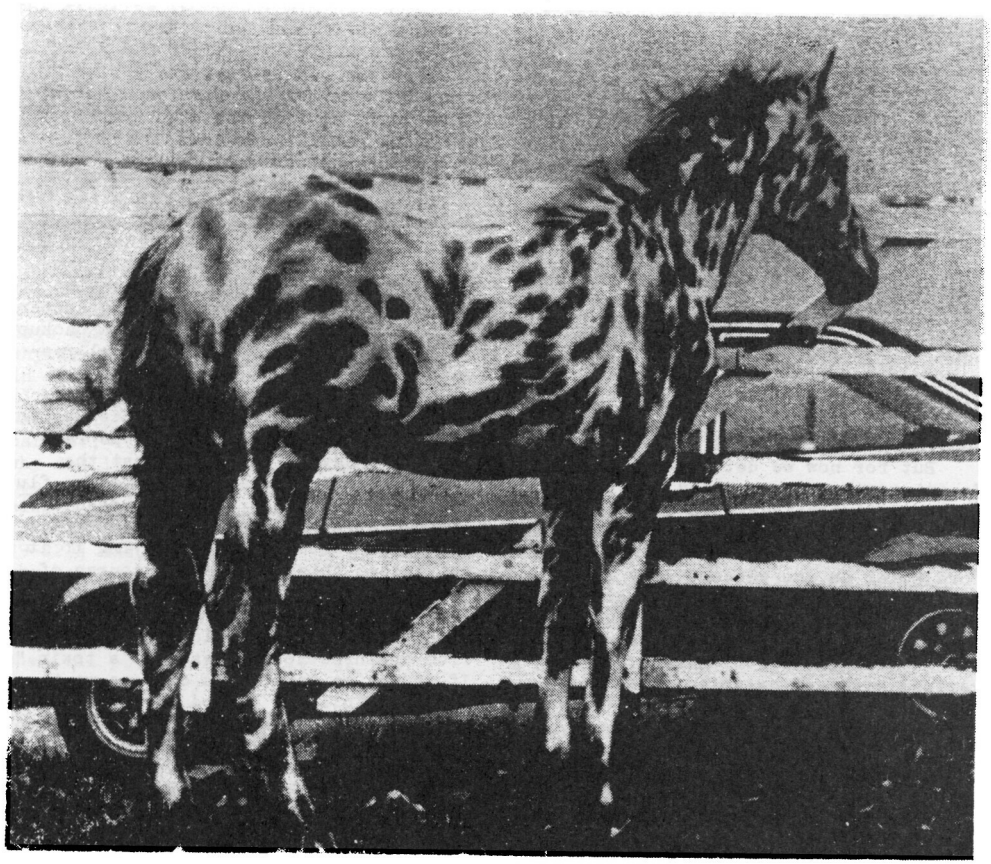
It should be noted that Zebradia is only remarkable for his markings - he does not possess any other strange features (eg the deformations of the 'Malton Mutant' - see The News 15/6). Zebradia will probably grow into a 16.2hh stallion.

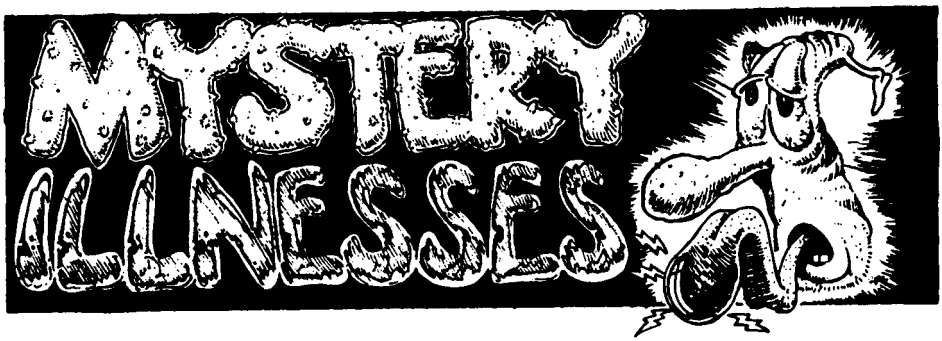
Nigel Watson - January 1977.

((Photo: Copyright N Watson & R Hebb.
Poem: Copyright Jennifer Ashley.))

Zebradia

At the icecream parlour
There's a new little foal.
His mother and father
Have reached a great goal;
For the new little foal
Has a very nice coat.
Oh! So bright!
The colours are...guess!
Yes! Black and white.
He's just like a zebra
Come in from the wild!
But really he came into
this world
In a normal way,
With the vet's calm hand
Helping him through
to a world of delight,
At the icecream parlour,
In Hibaldstow.





LEGION FEVER - PHILADELPHIA 1976

Since our last listing of mystery illnesses (News 8/9) we have accumulated quite a heap of clippings. By far the biggest story was that of the unidentified illness that killed 28 (we think!) and hospitalized nearly 180 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in the last half of last year, before it vanished as mysteriously as it arrived. This period saw an extraordinary number of strange and exotic diseases - typhoid, paratyphoid and polio outbreaks in the UK; Lassa fever and Marburg (or Green Monkey) fever (both from Africa) pop up in Britain, and scare health authorities in Canada and USA,both of which were in the midst of hysteria about a new form of Swine flu and controversy over the innoculations; an 'impotence' panic breaks out in Thailand; the 'Black Death' turns up in California; and US papers in 1976 announce a new strain of gonorrhea, and that 9 million inhabitants of Michigan face the possibility of being poisoned by an industrial pollutant called PBB which can cause brain damage - which will be detailed in the next and future issues of FT along with mystery illnesses of the "mass hysteria" kind, and their equivalents among animals.

But for now we detail the 'Legion Fever' as the press called it, that broke out in Philadelphia after the annual convention there of the state's American Legion at the Bellevue-Stratford Hotel on the weekend July 21-24. It is a classical scenario of clashing experts, contradictory theories, inefficiency, bungling, scaremongering and general ineffectiveness of the various kinds of establishments (commercial, political, medical, scientific etc) caught with their collective pants down by the Unknown.

Reconstructing the story from the first news reports, it seems that the first sufferers came down with flu-like symptoms within 2-4 days of the last day of the convention (ie, 24 July) - chills, headache and high fever temperature with congestion and chest pains. Later autopsies revealed a foamy bloody fluid that filled up the spaces between the air-sacs in the lungs, preventing oxygen reaching the bloodstream - a condition easily identifiable, even in its early stages, by X-ray. By 4 Aug, there were 120 hospitalized and 20 dead in various hospitals in Pennsylvania and New York states. No one realized the scale of the danger until perhaps the 2nd Aug - and one of the first to alert the authorities was Edward Hoak, an official of the American Legion, who suddenly noticed the high number of deaths and illnesses among his friends and friends' friends, all of whom had attended the convention a few weeks before at the Bellevue. Formal recognition of Legion Fever (hereinafter LF) as an epidemic of unknown origin came on 3 Aug with the rapid mobilization of a team of investigators from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) with a backup of 1000 federal and state medical researchers.

Several important statements were issued the next day (4th). State Health Secretary, Leonard Bachmann, was rash enough to say to the press that the symptoms were consistent with swine flu and viral pneumonia - that touched off another swine-flu panic and his office was pressurized into identifying if it was indeed this disease - a course of action that later suffered heavy criticism. Dr Walter Dowdle, CDC's virology director said: "It could be anything from an infectious disease to a toxin." If it was an infectious disease we were now well into the period when secondary cases (ie those who had come into contact with the initial victims) should be showing themselves. Indeed, six were suspected but found to have a readily identified form of flu. What made the authorities hold their breath even more

was another much bigger convention now going on in the Bellevue, the 41st International Eucharistic Congress, with an expected 1 million attendees. Curiously, we only learn much later that 2 of these developed LF when they died (27 Aug), and the only connexion it was possible to identify was that they had stayed at the Bellevue. Other than that, we know that a man who delivered food to the hotel, a woman who attended an auxilliary meeting only, a busdriver who took passengers to the convention and 4 passengers from his and another bus, but as all these were directly associated with the Bellevue site they were considered to be primary cases.

On the 5th Aug a UK professor calms us by warning that if it's a new type of flu it could become pandemic worldwide. The toll is now 23 dead, 138 hospitalized; and Gov. Milton Shapp announces that the disease remains unidentified but it "does not appear to be swine flu" nor bubonic plague, lassa fever, Marburg disease or lymphatic memengitis - nor does it seem to be bacterially based. The first of the survivors recovers.

By 7 Aug 25 were dead, 152 in hospital. Papers carry a quiet announcement that the FBI will probe the theory of a "biological attack" with an airborne poison since the disease has behaved more like a toxin than a virus, both in treatment and in confinement. This marks a fundamental change in the whole investigation. The major questions being asked are: if it was a viral flu, why has it shown in early summer instead of the usual autumn-winter season; why, given the short incubation period (3 days apx) was there no secondary spread; why are there no runny noses and coughs in what was "clearly" a respiratory illness; was the disease latent in Philadelphia, or was it brought by a carrier; if the latter, then from where; why did it seem to kill men aged 40-50 (on average) in their prime when it had missed the more vulnerable young and elderly ((the victims' ages ranged from 39-82)); and the key question of all, why had the hotel staff escaped when LF struck at incidental bus drivers and delivery-men (see 4 Aug)? So the search switched from an organism, to hunt a chemical poison, and daily, as the dreaded secondary wave failed to materialize, more experts switched to the new opinion. However, one top toxicologist, Dr Richard Cohn admitted their searches had found nothing so far in this line. On the 9th Aug, with 27 dead, Bachmann said the disease seemed to have a 3-day incubation period and that at least 9 of the sick had only attended on one day, the 23rd July (now there's one for the 23-spotters!) - whatever happened must have happened then, he said.

The papers on the 15th Aug now drop the toll back to 25 dead & 152 hospitalized - no reasons are given, but in retrospect we'd guess that some deaths could now be attributed to identifyable sources. The 2 attendees at the Eucharistic Congress (also held at the Bellevue, but 1-8 Aug) come down with LF. Two men at a candlemakers' convention held in the city earlier that July also develop a suspect condition. Then matters are made worse by the collapse of 100 young bandsmen in Walden, NY, but we'll give you this one in the next issue. By now the investigation had switched "almost wholly" to chemical poisons - 17 metal toxins had been ruled out and the hot favourite was nickel carbonyl. On the 19th Aug a leading toxicologist, Dr F William Sunderman Jr, said that some symptoms of LF and the degenerate state of victims' lungs was consistent with nickel carbonyl poisoning - but other symptoms (like the high fever) were not! It is also revealed that the research team found 19 plumbing violations in the Bellevue, the most relevant being that a hose taking cold water to the hotel's air-conditioner lacked a valve to prevent any "backflow", thus putting the whole drinking supply at risk from nasty things like ammonia compounds. Since most of the investigators agree that not all of the afflicted ate or drank at the Bellevue, it seems we can discount this theory. 27 Aug - the 2 Eucharistic Congress attendees die. 29 Aug - a 12-man team is appointed by the CDC to continue searching for possible causes of LF. The toll finally stabilizes at 29 dead, 180 hospitalized.

That same day some scientists at MIT and Harvard weigh-in with their idea that if a toxic metal was involved, it could have accumulated in the victims' hair within a few millimeters of the root. Nothing more is heard from them. Toward the end of September a pathologist, Dr Jerrold Abraham, says at least 4 of the deceased showed traces of "metal fumes" in their lungs, but he doesn't say how that squared with any other fact in the case. Around Sept 1st the Soviet weekly Literaturnaya Gazeta speculated that a secret Pentagon chemical warfare experiment had gone wrong.

Then came another bright theory. Dr Edward Schantz (in National Enquirer 12 Oct 76) said "all the indications point to a poison...it could well have been ricin," (a deadly toxin extracted from castor beans.) Then this famous biochemist suggested it could only have got to the legionnaires by a wilful act. Ricin, it seems, can be extracted fairly simply, and the castor bean grows plentifully all over the southern USA; it could produce the raging fever and deteriorated lungs of LF. But wait! that only accounts for 2 of the symptoms, and the hot favourite, nickel carbonyl, was doubtful for the same reason. It's no use; the experts have fallen upon each other. The CDC say they considered ricin and dismissed it because there was no sign of its usual effect, intestinal damage - LF damaged only lung tissue. Ah, said Dr Schantz, that's because the legionnaires sniffed it, not ate it. A toxicology professor from the Vanderbilt University Medical School, Dr Wayland Hayes Jr, agreed that airborne ricin might produce effects like LF - CDC toxicologist Dr Renate Kimbrough disagreed, saying we don't know because it's not been studied in tests before. But Dr Schantz now has the bit between his teeth and, with imagination straining, steps out into the realm of artistic creation. "I wouldn't put it past the saboteurs to have put the ricin into an ordinary air-freshener spray and sprayed it around the rooms," he said. What a splendid effort, sir! and we guess that if it's as toxic as you say they all went about spraying wearing gas masks! Perhaps we have missed something, but why were only a few affected - "Everyone at the convention could have ingested this toxin...but some were more susceptible than others, and died." Ah, then ricin can't really be "one of the most toxic substances known to man" as you said earlier. It is? Oh, excuse us for being dim, but if it is a powerful poison that can pass through the body in less than 24 hours leaving behind very serious damage to internal organs, how come it was as long as 3 days before there were any symptoms?

Perhaps Dr Schantz can be forgiven for being a bit vague, as a colleague, Dr Sunderman Jr, is back having quite forgotten his own reservations about the nickel carbonyl hypothesis, now getting breathless about villains mixing the stuff with dry-ice and dumping it all over the Bellevue (!). What seems to have changed his mind is an "anonymous, ominous" letter he received ranting about the substance and how it could be used to kill "authority and military-type figures". Dr Sunderman sprung this on the Congressional committee on 29th October, and was supported by the chief forensic psychiatrist at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, who said the writing was characteristic of "an envious paranoid, full of hatred." Curiously, the letter was dated 28 July, before the public became aware of epidemic. Just how significant this is, we never learn.

On the 10th November the Bellevue-Stratford announces that it will close in 10 days. The adverse publicity caused huge business losses as custom stayed away, other conventions switched their bookings elsewhere. Yet Gerald Ford came there after his first TV encounter with Jimmy Carter; Gov. Shapp spent a night there, and the Pennsylvania Medical Society deliberately held their convention there, each an attempt to reassure the public and reestablish confidence in the city's tourist business...but none of it helped. In its last few days the Bellevue bravely hosted a meeting of over 170 medical scientists who met to discuss the latest theories and findings. There are virtually no new leads or conclusions - and ricin seems to have gone the way of the swine-flu theory. The only new lead developed as recently as 10 Jan 1977; Dr Leslie Page, a microbiologist at the Animal Disease Center, said that recent tests showed that chlamydiae bacteria, spread by pigeons, could cause pneumonia-like symptons similar to those of LF. This backed the claim (18 Nov 76) of Dr Gary Latimer, at Sacred Heart hospital, Allentown, Pa, who said he had cured 8 sufferers by treating them for chlamydia infections. But wait a minute! - weren't we told in the early days of the panic that bacterial infections were the first to be ruled out? (see 5 Aug).

This surprising series of turnabouts (bacterial/viral/metal toxin/plant toxin/metal toxin/ and back to bacteria) could only arise from inconclusive and ambiguous evidence feeding the pet theories of various experts - so it seems inevitable there would sooner or later be allegations of blunders and inefficiency. Dr Carl Wecht, Allegheny county coroner and spokesman for the CDC team of medical vigilantes, told National Enquirer (12 Oct 76) that such was the initial headlong rush to establish the cause was swine-flu that likelyhood of it being a toxin was not considered, despite some experts' opinions, until it was "probably too late to find anything." He alleges that vital

samples were never collected, samples were wasted in swine-flu tests, samples had been taken from "inappropriate areas of the lung", and that blood and urine samples were made useless from the toxicologists point of view by not being frozen immediately "because toxic chemicals break down very quickly in the body." On top of that, investigating experts were not given full autopsy reports, and that "even now" only reports on 10 of the 29 deaths were available.

Well - we don't know what the findings of the committee were - perhaps they're still sitting - but to the public (especially the American public) this bickering is a poor substitute for hard facts, and we know from many a Fortean scenario that in the absence of concrete graspables and the persistance of mystery the public and the media can conjure up their own explanations to our mind if not equally valid then doubly fascinating. On 25 Nov we are told that previous speculations about ruthless, mad (but scientifically adept) assassins received another boost as a legionnaire, George Chiavetta, told the committee that on at least 3 occasions (and once in the company of four others) he had noticed a strange "glassy-eyed man in a royal blue suit". ((Hmmm - for comments on 'staring-eyes' linked with strange phenomena see Anthony Bell's article FT 17/6)) Chiavetta said he overheard this man muttering: "It's too late. You won't be saved. The legionaires are doomed." Chiavetta had told the police who reported it to Leonard Bachmann, the Health Secretary, who handed it back to the police because his department, he said, was not equipped for police-work and was fully employed in the virus-hunt at that time. The police, it seems, thought it was Bachmann's worry and did nothing about it. We wonder if this portends a schism among the Men In Black, or whether some among them are becoming more sartorially conscious? Nothing is said about how this figure relates to Dr Schantz's ricin-sprayers or Dr Sunderman Jr's hate-filled paranoid dry-ice dumper. A thought occurs to us of a grim parody of a scene in Shea & Wilson's Illuminatus! - that perhaps all three (and maybe some other unnoticed weirdos) seeded their own brands of death there, oblivious of each other and the Pentagon and Russian agents doing the same thing!

That's no more bizarre (or unlikely) than the latest theory - according to a hysterical (rabid and laughable) article by P.R. Wilshire in the January 1977 edition of Ancient Astronauts, UFOs and their occupants and contactees are resposible by (deliberately or not) omitting any decontamination procedure! In passing, Wilshire suggests that many previous plagues, mystery epidemics and (of course) the recent wave of USA animal mutilations all have similar ET origins. As a matter of interest, the earliest mention of an ET connexion for LF appears in a letter in Midnight 16 August 1976, in which an Alabama reader counters a previous suggestion in that paper that secret Russian germ warfare was responsible with the idea that the UFOs were firing germs at America "to make us think it's the Russians and start a war."

The mind boggles!

((The story was reconstructed from extensive coverage clipped from the (Newport News, Va) Daily Press, and Times-Herald; (Virginia Beach, Va) Pilot; and the Washington Post of the mentioned dates, for which a huge debt is owed to Gary L Abbott. Many thanks also to Ken Rogers, John Michell and Ion Will for clippings of the UK coverage, and to Dave Reissig for the copy of Ancient Astronauts.))

Robert JM Rickard - February 1977.

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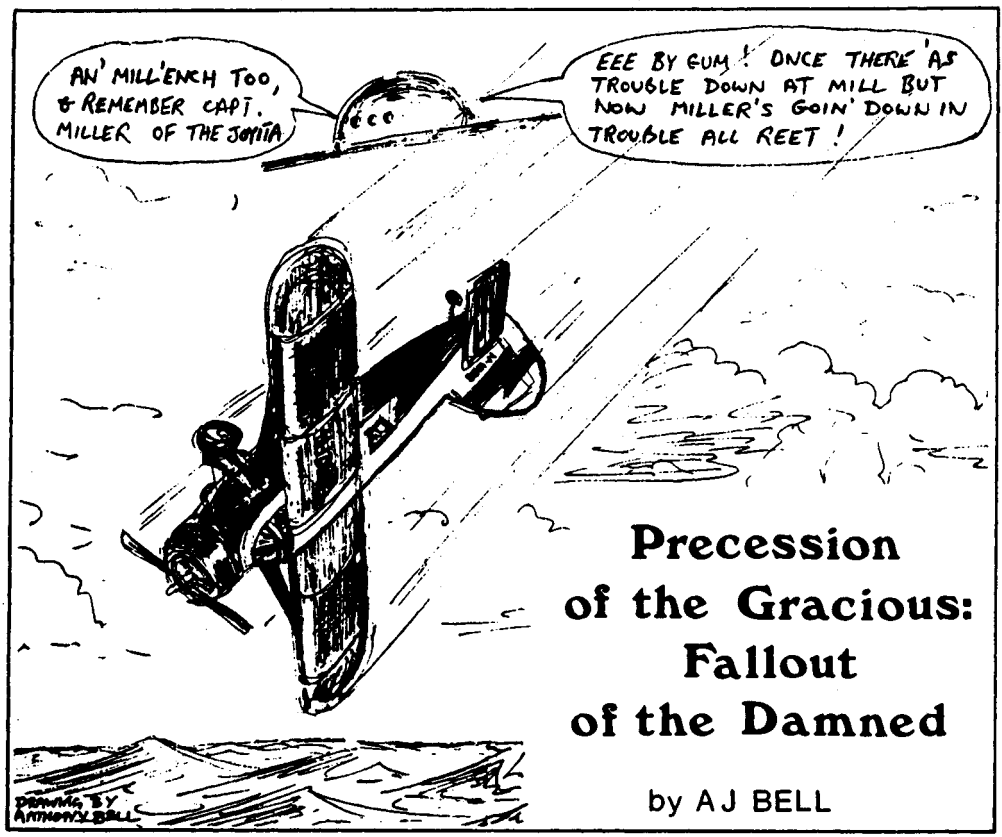
Plans /cont from p2...

Another possibility is for some of you to place blurbs in the Fortean books in your local library. Write if you want any.

Beyond that we want to build up the mag to be the best of its kind in the field. We'd like more articles, more research, more letters, more speculation and actual discussion of Fortean themes. We want our book reviews respected by publishers so that our recommendation will mean something. We may at a later stage take in advertising from the book companies. After all, most people interested in Fortean matters are, automatically, book-oriented people. There's a great awareness generally today of our topics - all those latent readers. It's only a matter of reaching them!

Phenomena: A Book of Wonders by John Michell and myself has been subject to the vaguaries of the publishing world recently, with several changes in its detail and schedule. Last issue we said that the price will be an agreeable £2.95 - now we learn that the planned Spring release has been put back to the Autumn or late Summer. The American publisher will be Pantheon Books.

Anthony Bell continues his exposition of 'lexilinks' as a research tool, and contemplates some of the associations that can be found in a case we reported in The News 15/17, that of the silver notecase that fell out of the sky to tangle in the hair of Lynne Connolly, a Hull housewife. Tony also discovers, evocatively, that Mrs Connolly has a history of strange phenomena, as does her family, which suggests that we Forteans should perhaps begin to consider the witness as well as the phenomena just as the new UFOlogists are doing, and profitably - Ed.


AN' MILL'ENCH TOO, & REMEMBER CAPT. MILLER OF THE JOHTA
EEE BY GUM! ONCE THERE 'AS TROUBLE DOWN AT MILL BUT NOW MILLER'S GOIN' DOWN IN TROUBLE ALL REET!
DRAWN BY ANTHONY BELL

Precession of the Gracious: Fallout of the Damned

by A J BELL

In 'Lexilinks' (1) I noted words repeated in Bible sayings, such as 'cast' in 'Do not cast pearls before swine' and 'Cast the motes from your own eyes first'. Though doubtless of earlier origin, Caesar said: 'The die is cast' before committing his army to crossing the Rubicon. The image of an army plunging into water reminds me of Christ's saying that it would be better for a man to be cast into water with a millstone around his neck than for him to continue sinning. The word mill suggests rotation, and lexically we have an idea of rotation preceeding a dunking into water, a theme I will pursue.

Perhaps the dunking of Ronald Milhench and the supposed dunking of Glen Miller is Nature's expression of lexical rotation followed by a plunge - if THEY can't drop a man with a millstone round his neck into water, someone with an appropriate name will do! There is an East Anglian legend of a lady in white, sometimes seen near a Mill Road, who throws herself into a river. (2) Another East Anglian legend also concerns a white lady, one who seeks a partner for a dance on a castle-top. If the partner displeases her he is cast into the dried-up moat below (3) - he dies after falling from grace and then falls away from the graceful lady. I note that Glen Miller was a dance band leader.

Lynn Connolly, who also loves dancing, found a strange little notecase in her hair as she was hanging out her washing. Her hairstyle being a lexically rotational whirligig. She felt a tap on her head and felt something in her hair. She shook her

head and the notecase fell to the ground - rotation followed by a fall. Interestingly, the notecase seems to be the kind a lady would use at a dance to keep a record of partners' names. Perhaps it belongs to that white lady on the castle top! Phyllis Newcombe burst into SHC after dancing.(4) - another hazard of rotation. In the Allende letters we are told of a man 'taking fire' after handling a ship's compass (5) and there is the case of three men blazing after holding a vehicle's wheel (4). The similar names of SHC victims and authorities suggest the idea of holding or contacting a rotating thing: eg Lilly White (describing hands), Wright (a maker of wheels), and Knight (suggesting Round Table)(4). Also Bertholdi, Bartholin etc are similar to 'berth', a fixture about which ships pivot. Note that we dial 999 in case of fire, and London's Great Fire was in 1666 - I feel 6 and 9 are associated with fire. Inverted commas have a 6 or 9 shape and 'coma' is Greek for hair - the hair Mrs Connolly rotated. Note the 'com' in Newcombe, compass and combustion. In News 7/3 there's the story of Pat Cummins who SHC'd while jailed. Cummins is a make of compression-ignition engine - Perhaps Pat pressed the round supper-plate causing ignition! The inventor associated with this type of engine was Deisel, thought to have fallen overboard and drowned in the Channel. The first 3 letters of 'fire' are the 6th, 9th and (2x9)th in the alphabet - the blazing man in the Allende Letters who held the compass burned for 2x9 days.

The idea of rotation involving dials is illustrated by the action of Agar, as described in The Silver Bridge (6), when he examined a TV set's dials minutely before rotating the set; and the reversed pictures taken from a TV by August Roberts where the dial and screen section were separately rotated about the vertical axis (7). In the Allende Letters reference is made to a 'reverse snap neutralizer' - just what August Roberts needed! - and the remark is made that such a device in a magnetic net could catch a UFO and that if the Russians had one they would have cornered the world's diamond market as a dead giveaway. Well, a dead giveaway is a die castoff! I note Agar is similar to Agartha, derived from Argha, meaning a long ship, and thus similar in turn to Ark and Argo.

The Silver Bridge on the Ohio was the scene of a mass auto-dunking when it fell from grace, and the area around it had seen visits by a mysterious mothman entity (8). Our editor's view that mothmen/birdmen type entities are associated with softwood trees (9) is indicated by the fact that the Silver Bridge fell when LBJ switched on the lights of the White House softwood Christmas tree (8,10). It's interesting that the author of Silver Bridge is Gray Barker, for 'gray' is similar to 'grace', and silver-grey is the typical mothman colour. Mrs Connolly who found the silver notecase (or was it the other way round?) had the maiden name Gray.

Pincer-like eclipsing dial sweeps are reflected in the pincer-like claws of the silver-grey Pascagoula entities seen by Hickson and Parker (11) and the Cornish Owlmen of 1976 (12). Hickson and Parker were fishing near a bridge when their experience began. I associate mothmen/birdmen with bird attacks and I note that the bird attack reported in FT 17/3 on Kevin Graham (gray-ham) occurred as he crossed a bridge. Pont is French for bridge and the grey-suited visitors of George Adamski rode in a 1946 Pontiac, a division noted for its silver streak ornament. One of these visitors was called Fir Kon, which perhaps equals conifer (or fir-cone - Ed.)

In Silver Bridge there is the story of Woody Derenberger's contact with an entity called Indrid Cold and his (com)panions. Perhaps Woody = trees = silva = arbor, so that Woody Derenberger + Indrid Cold = Coldharbor? I notice that one of the 1897 airshipnauts tried to purchase a cold chisel, bluestone and oil (shades of Coldharbor, Stonehenge and Beltane.) Speaking of airships, I'm reminded that THEY tried to get a lawyer called Collins to front for them in the airship project, and an airship dropped a parcel into Lincoln Park (10) - Collins is almost an anagram of Lincoln. The Pascagoula case involved a lawyer called Colingo, and Doc Shiels has written to me mentioning a mothman type entity at Lincoln's Inn, Cornwall. Lincoln's Inn is also the name of one of the four 'Inns of Court' in which British lawyers are called to the Bar - one of the others is Gray's Inn. On the same Thursday night as Hickson and Parker's contact, three UFOs were sighted in the area and reported to a Sheriff Diamonds. One involved a man in the Pinecrest subdivision, and another concerned three men on their way to a place called The Home of Grace. Diamonds, pines and Grace - THEY're laying it on thick! (Incidentally JFK was killed in the company of Texas Governor Connolly in a make of car named for the lawyer and statesman Lincoln.) The similarity between Collins, Colingo, Lynn Connolly and Lincoln suggests Linn, a Gælic word associated with a fall. One entity, Linn Erri, made initial contact by radio and her name suggests to me 'fall into error', in other words a fall

from grace.

Another radio-entity, Nacoma, once gave a lecture on the dangers of atomic explosions - THEY don't like the fall-out (13). Yet another radio-entity was called Ankar-22, which suggests an airship anchor that got caught thereby berthing the vessel (14). In a letter to the San Francisco Bee, 24 November 1896, it is said that the Lord Commissioner of Mars' airships can anchor themselves in space and wait for the rotation of the earth to bring them near their destination, very suggestive of holding and rotation (11). The letter also mentioned aluminium (a common silver-grey element found in combination), and diamonds.

Continuing the theme of rotation preceeding a fall I notice that in the Tacoma affair a rotating group of saucers touched another and then a 'slag' fell partly onto a harbour patrol boat, and witness Dahl compared the saucers to dials on a Buick dash. Later the owner of the boat saw a similar saucer emerge from a cumulus cloud. There were 6 saucers over the boat, and Ken Arnold (a man partly concerned with fighting softwood forest fires) and Capt. Smith of United Airlines investigated the affair. Both had previous sightings - Arnold's being the famous 24 June 1947 incident when he saw 9 discs while he was searching for the wreck of a Commando aircraft; Smith's was also of 9 discs (15). Incidentally, Arnold's book contains photos of a strange fire on a wooden (arbor/silva) bridge over a river in softwood country.

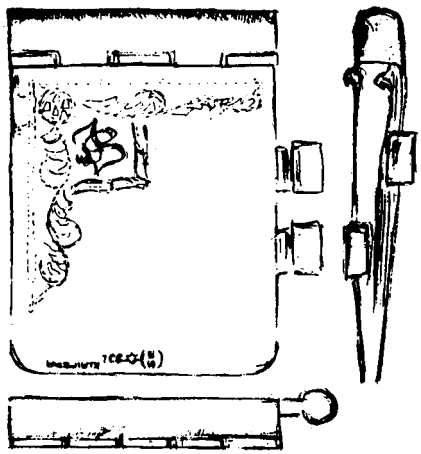
Pascagoula UFOs and Sheriff Diamond - the diamond is a jewel associated with the god Mars (14), who with his brother Vulcan formed a mythical military-industrial complex. Vulcan is also symbolized in the industrial processes of milling, casting and die-making, words I've previously drawn attention to. Incidentally, the Rubicon, which Caesar crossed after the die was cast by a phantom reed (red-Mars?) player, is suggestive of the jewel ruby. The name of that strange derelict of Capt. Miller's, Joyita, means 'little jewel'(16). Imagine the scene at Vulcan's Forge when a red hot ingot is taken from the fiery furnace with pincer-like tongs, hammered violently and then plunged into water. Perhaps Vulcan drops the slag from UFOs à la Maurey Island!

I note that about the same time that the Viking spacecraft was studying Mars there were a number of mishaps - especially fires and dunkings - concerning military inventory. A fire on a RN ship in dock, and a man fell to his death from her sister ship. Two US cargo planes of the same type had 'accidents' on the same day, and a NATO exercise had more losses than usual including a plane dunked from a ship. This plane in turn lost a 'phoenix' missile - the phoenix being a mythical creature (associated with fire) related to the Sphinx and the Garuda and hence to mothmen/birdmen. The Sphinx is near the Great Pyramid and I see that the numerical equivalent of lexilinks found by M W Saunders between Mars and Earth's pyramids involve volcanos (17), a word associated with Vulcan. The Sphinx is a man-lion, and along with the Cornish Owlman, the Viking mission and military mishaps there was a spate of UK lion sightings in that 1976 summer, including at least one sighting in my own county of Yorkshire. (See also the cases given elsewhere in this issue)

When visiting Woody Derenberger, Gray Barker saw people sitting in cars near Derenberger's house and as Barker drove near, the people 'huddled low' in their vehicles - ie they fell. In one vehicle, however - a station-wagon, a 'woody' - a man twiddled an illuminated dial and Barker thought he could hear the Danse Macabre music (6). Dials and dancing. Often strange vehicles appear in UFO flaps with violet illuminated dials. Violet, a blue-red colour, reminds me that the first pictures from the Viking-lander on Mars showed a blue sky; later it was said to be a deep pink after instruments had been properly calibrated. Helene Smith claimed contact with Martians and once saw a vision of a bridge over a blue-pink lake (presumably a reflection of a Martian sky). A man flew off this bridge, touched the water below and returned - luckier than some! (13) The page edges of the notepad in Mrs Connolly's silver notecase are red with a slight bluish tinge - perhaps dye instability, and suggestive of Mars.

Mrs Connolly was hanging out her wash at about 10.30 am on (about) 21 October 1975 when she felt a tap on her head and something in her hair which turned out to be the notecase. The case measures approximately 36.5 mm in width and 63 mm long. Strangely, I was told the case measured exactly $1\frac{1}{2}$"x$2\frac{1}{2}$", an erroneous datum that is highly significant as the ratio $1\frac{1}{2}:2\frac{1}{2}$ was a characteristic of Noah's Ark and the Ark of the Covenant - someone fell into error! Essentially, the case is made from two old-type silver rectangular plates hinged together containing a notepad - could a bird have been attracted by the silver flash, picked it up and dropped it on Mrs Connolly's head? Alternatively it may have been thrown from a neighbour's upper window - or materialized at a spot

A sketch (by Anthony Bell) of the silver notecase that fell from 'no where', landing in Mrs Connolly's hair. It measures 63x36.5mm.



near Mrs Connolly's head! Mrs Connolly finds it difficult to accept that a bird was responsible and the origin remains a puzzle. Her maiden-name was Lynne Victoria Gray - reminiscent of Victor Grayson, an MP who vanished on his way to Hull in 1920 (18), where Mrs Connolly lives. I wonder if there is a connection between the notecase and Grayson or perhaps the Hull fishing vessel, Gaul, which vanished (19).

As I associate the Fall from Grace with boats, ships and fishing, I find it interesting that the word 'Klaipeda' is found on the notecase, oddly, upside down. Klaipeda is a Baltic port, and I note that Tacoma, San Francisco (where the US airship started out), and Falmouth (haunt of the Cornish Owlman) like Hull and Klaipeda share similar industries like docking, boat building, flour milling and fishing. Pascagoula is also a ship-building centre. The case bears the legend 'SE' and 'C8' near a six-pointed star on the front together with a scroll design of the letters 'JB' or 'TB'. Only 13 pages remain on the notepad with the stubs of the rest still in the clip.

Mrs Connolly finds the 13 remaining pages rather ominous as she has had a lot of 'bad luck' and illness since moving to her present address, culminating in her husband's near-death a few years ago. During this crisis Mrs Connolly and her sister saw Mr Connolly's face appear in profile on a wall while he was gravely ill in hospital. Electrical equipment in the house often gives trouble, and Mrs Connolly claims to hear a breathing sound in her room whenever she is alone, but not in the company of her husband. About Christmas 1964, Mrs Connolly, her brother, sister and parents lived for a time in a flat in which the family dog refused to enter certain rooms, including the attic shared by Mrs Connolly and her sister. Doors would open on their own, and occasionally a Little Green Man could be seen seated crosslegged on a wall, repeatedly turning pages in a book and doffing his Trilby hat. Most of the family witnessed strange events in the flat and were glad to leave. Being no stranger to unusual phenomena myself, I told Mrs Connolly and her sister of my own experience with this type of phenomenon - if I hadn't I doubt whether they would have mentioned the LGM episode. I feel many people have seen strange events - eg UFOs - and feel embarrassed to relate them unless prompted.

Interesting that Mrs Connolly's 'vision' was on a wall. When she was young she told her father that a certain neighbour had died and been taken away at 7 o'clock. She said this at 6 o'clock, accurately predicting the event. 6, 7 and death. Sometimes one reads of seven things, one of which is later destroyed or taken away, leaving six. Eg G H Williamson writes of the 'Unholy Six', a group of six planets where originally there were seven. The unwhole theme is echoed in the myth of the spotted sun Akhenaton and his spotless wife Nefertiti who had seven daughters; one died early (20). Doubtless things were at sixes and sevens when this occurred and the legend of the Pleiades, Snow White and the seven (green?) dwarfs, and the story of Moses and Ziporah (21) also highlight the number seven.

I am still investigating the Silver Notecase affair. I went to see the notecase because I felt Mrs Connolly had a significant name, and because I wonder if people with mystically significant names have a specially close contact with the world of the strange - an idea that also occurred to Fort.

Anthony J Bell - November 1976

References:

1) Fortean Times 17/5
2) Lantern 15/20
3) Lantern 14/3
4) Fortean Times 16/26
5) Uninvited Visitors, Ivan Sanderson, 1969 (Tandem, 1974)
6) The Silver Bridge Gray Barker (Saucerian 1970)

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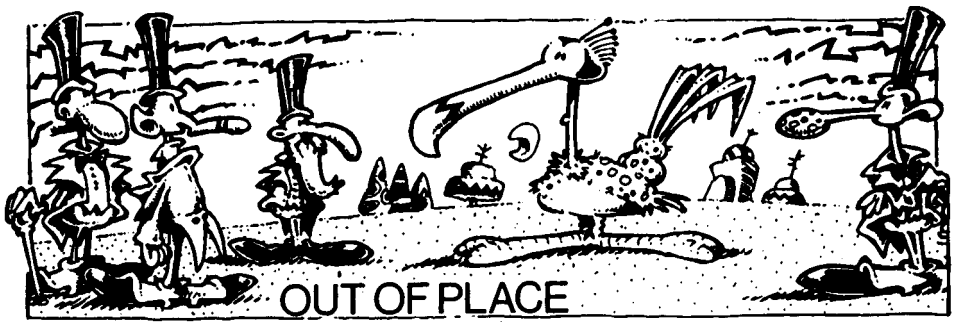


Since our last listing of 'Surrey Puma' stories (The News 14/3ff.) we have accumulated a few more, old and new.

The first case is from a letter to me from John Michell (dated 8 May 1976): "Here's a good story to fill a gap in your puma record told me today by my friend Mark Palmer. On Xmas Eve 1968 he and his friend, Maldwyn Thomas, were taking horses across Devon and camped on Know Stone Moor, near Tiverton. In the late evening a local policeman roused them to ask if they had seen a puma. One had been reported there that day."

Next, another anecdote, from Auberon Waugh's column in the New Statesman, 26 December 1975: "...a few years ago... I was standing at an upstairs window (of a house in West Somerset) in the late afternoon with about 4 cricketers and their wives or girlfriends - one of whom was a teetotaller - when we distinctly saw a black panther run across the fields in front of the house." Waugh suggested writing a letter to the press to record the event but "several of the witnesses started to back down... they thought it might have been an extremely large black cat." Then Waugh says wryly: "The modern mind isn't interested in ghosts; it rejects them as unwelcome reminders of some discredited past." (Cr. John Michell John Rimmer, Roger Sandell). The letter from John Rimmer (dated 23 February 1976) also contained notices of two books to be released in the summer that year: one called Man-eater by Ted Willis, and the other The Surrey Cat by Andrew Sinclair - the former about two tigers that roam and kill on the Yorkshire moors and the latter about a black puma which terrifies a Surrey village. Little did we realise that that summer would see fiction become a pseudo-fact - see 'The Nottingham Lion' drama, FT 18/25 - 'pseudo-fact' because despite some authentic sightings of a lion, no lion was ever caught (see items below) and it was explained-away as a paper-bag!

Our most modern sightings of the 'Surrey Puma' begin with an infuriatingly brief note in the Daily Mirror 6 July 1976, that a journalist, Sally Rose, claimed to have seen the beast, it says not where or when. That same month, the Basingstoke Gazette 23 July 1976 reported that just a few days earlier a young housewife, Anne Barnes, was hanging out washed nappies in the large garden behind her house in Odiham, Hants, when she turned to call her child and froze in her tracks. "At first I thought it was just a well-fed cat, but when I looked closer I could see the animal had huge shoulders like a bear ... a real live puma in my own English country garden - I just can't believe it." She said it stood very still for a few seconds and then in one bound leapt on to a 10ft wall and disappeared into some dense trees beyond. (Cr.: Mike Rickard)

That latest note we have is from the (London) Evening Standard 31 January '77 -- that in the early morning of the 29th (that's my guess - I wish reporters would give us a few facts, like dates) a motorist reported seeing 'the puma' in Nutfield Mid Street, near Redhill, Surrey, about the size of a retriever, loping along like a cat. (Our reporter clearly doesn't want to bore us with details!). The police said the man seemed sincere enough for them to switch all their patrol cars to search the area. Nothing was found.

SCOTTISH MYSTERY CAT UPDATE

The last news we had of the 'Ayrshire Puma' was a double sighting on 14 June 1974, which we recorded in News 7/2. About 26 August last year at Ballagioch Hill, near Eaglesham, Renfrew, a 'shadowy cat-like creature' left tracks at the scene of a killing of five geese. Large chunks had been ripped from a 6 ft fence, and an alsatian in a nearby kennel, 'normally vicious', was found cowering in terror. Richard O'Grady, director of Calderpark Zoo, Glasgow, was brought to the scene by police and admits he was prepared to dis-

miss the killings as the work of dogs as he says he had done 'many times in the past with similar incidents.' 'Now,' he says, 'I have very little doubt it was a puma.' 'Each goose had puncture marks on its body 1½" deep and 4-5" apart. That's how a puma kills,' said O'Grady. Deep tracks were found in a stream nearby, and in O'Grady's opinion these too point to puma: 'They went in a straight line, some of them overlapping the way a cat moves.' Bath Chronicle 28 August 1976 (Cr: John Michell); Sunday Times 29 August 1976 (Cr: A J Bell). There are interesting aspects to this incident. Firstly, the report mentions that the geese bore no other sign of injury. By the tone of surprise at the killings we might guess that these were the first for some time or at all, which would make it very strange indeed in a landscape with no evidence of any other puma kills that these geese were killed and not eaten, or partly eaten as the large cats are inclined to do. Instead we are reminded of some of the cases in Fort of the mystery killings of animals 'in a vampirish way'. We might also ask of the Scottish puma, as of its Surrey cousin, why there are no remains of kills - pumas are alleged to be hungry or mean most of the time - despite the fact that it has, according to the police, been in the Renfrew/Ayrshire area 'for the last three years'? The police say they have sightings from 'hundreds of people including at least a score of policemen over this period.'

The latest note we have is that late on the night of 21 October 1976 a driver says a large 'cat-like animal' bounded across the Glasgow road in front of his car near a housing estate on the outskirts of Blantyre, Lanarkshire. (Glasgow) Sunday Post 24 October 1976 (Cr. John Rimmer).

The 'Ayrshire puma' also seems to be developing another characteristic of its Surrey cousin - that is, we can say of it that it is no longer limited to a puma or to Ayrshire. We have commented before on the way the Phenomenon seems to shift the form of its manifestation just when it seems to have been labelled or 'explained-away' - a feature of all our categories of pseudo-facts in the Phenomenal Reality. Anyway, this particular were-puma showed itself in another form about a week before the Glenfarg sighting (above). On the night of 10 August 1976, a woman in Glenfarg, Perthshire (apx. 60 miles from the Ayrshire sighting near Beith), was washing her supper dishes when her dog whined and scratched at the door. The lady let it out, and on hearing its barking change to a whimper, she looked out to see it on the lawn shivering with fright. Sitting on its haunches on top of the garden wall was a huge cat, 'the size of a fully grown Labrador,' its eyes glowing orange in the dark. When she went out (brave woman!) the creature got up and began to spit and howl. She noted its long pointed and tufted ears and that it stood at least 3 ft high. Quickly, she scooped up the dog and dashed inside. The cat leapt into fields and vanished. Police claim there have been other sightings, including one in the main street of Glenfarg, and that chickens have gone missing. The description, though, is of a lynx, not a puma. (Glasgow) Sunday Post 15 August 1976 (Cr: Ion Will).

THE CENTRAL ENGLAND CAT

No area can consider itself respectable these days if it doesn't have its own large-cat myth. In FT 18/25f we summarized the story of the Nottingham 'lion' of July last year. In less than a week after the unfinished story died out in an embarrassed silence from the press and the authorities, another 'lion' popped up at Thorganby, Yorks, about 70 miles away. In this case, police thought it had no connection other than coincidence with the Nottingham scare (see FT 18/26f). JW Scaife sent us a clipping from the Yorkshire Evening Press 11 August 1976, which is worth giving here as it adds a few more details to the story of Alan Pestill (NB: Pestall, in earlier accounts). He says: 'I left home at 9.55 (on night of Monday, 9 August 1976). The evening was dark but the centre of the road was well lit by the moon. Out of the shadows came what I first thought was a dog, but as it got close I froze. It stared at me as it padded past and I stepped into the light to look at it. I was amazed - it was a large lioness!' The rest of the clipping testifies to Alan unliklihood of making the story up. The police took him seriously but a search the next day predictably failed to turn up a trail or a clue. I have speculated before about the apparent continuity between the old folklore tradition of 'Black Dogs' - well, if you're at all familiar with any of these tales you'll recognise the modus operandi of the BD here - the encounter in a lonely lane, and the creature's stare (if creature it is) as it pads by the witness. Make of that what you will. (Incidentally, BDs are still seen. Ivan Bunn has sent us a recent clipping, which we regret will have to be kept till later; and just last year a BD hit the headlines as haunting Princess Anne's new house.)

The next month, September, gave us two cases. The Leicester Mercury 5 September 1976 reported a large-scale police search in the Bermuda Village area of Nuneaton the day before, after a puma-like animal was reported seen. Police checked the zoos in the area but no large cats were missing. (Cr: Richard Cotton). A 'cougar' was reported seen on the 20th in the grounds of a seafront convalesoent home at Skegness! Police gave the story a high credibility because the witness was the town's police surgeon, Dr Alec Jamieson. He said: 'It was a large sandy coloured cat about 5 ft long; definitely a cougar.' He called in PC Jock Gartshore, who also saw the beast. Staff at the home said they had seen the thing several times over the previous few weeks and dismissed it as just a large unusual dog! A search in the grounds found tracks measuring 2½x3" across - and later an RSPCA inspector and a naturalist hid in the grounds with cameras, but, again, predictably, nothing materialised. Dr Jamieson remains convinced he saw a cougar, and thinks it may have been the 'Nottingham lion' on a walkabout. Scunthorpe Evening Telegraph 21 September 1976 (Cr: Nigel Watson).

On 23 October 1976, a lioness was found wandering around the Upton district of Chester. Advocates of the 'elemental' or 'genius loci' hypothesis (see FT 19/9) will be tickled by the fact that it was first spotted in Deva Lane (devas, of course, being ethereal beings taken over from Hindu beliefs by the Theosophists, and applied to 'shining beings' who supervise plant and animal life from a different plane or existence from ours. Hmm!) As the news and alarm calls spread, nearby Chester Zoo was quick to point out that all theirs were accounted for. Police mobilized foot and car patrols but the damned thing suddenly became unfindable (the 'teleportation' advocates will be chuckling at that!) To our knowledge no trace of it was ever found and the story evaporated as quickly as the creature. Liverpool Echo 23/10/76 (Cr John Rimmer).

TWO HANGOVERS FROM 1975

We were recently sent two cases from 1975 that we have not related before. On the night of 4 August, Ken Pearce left the door of his Fallowfield, Manchester, home open while he watched TV - it was very hot and he wanted a breeze. Much to his surprise the wind blew in a female leopard cub, which he later handed to the police. It's fairly certain the cub had been a pet (it was wearing a blue collar) and had been let loose. It was underfed and doubtless the thoughtless owner was contemplating the foodbills which would keep pace with the animal's growth. Needless to say, the police have failed to trace any owner and its origin remains a mystery. Daily Mirror and Scunthorpe Evening Telegraph 5 August 1975 (Cr: Nigel Watson).

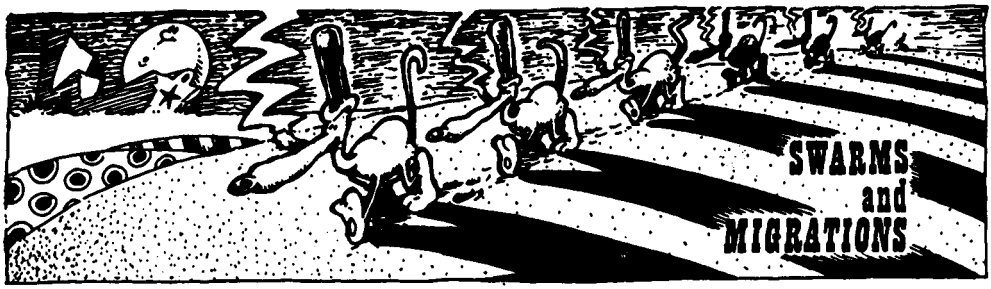
Earlier that year, the Wolverhampton Express & Star 29 April 1975, told of a huge police search in the Park Road and Rose Hill area of Willenhall for a creature resembling a panther. Willenhall seems a most unlikely place for such a panther-hunt being in the heart of the Wolverhampton/Walsall/West Bromwich industrial connurbation NW of Birmingham - but there it is! It was described by some residents of the area as about 3'6" long, 1'6" to 2' tall at the shoulder, black, and having 'very bright, red eyes. Police said no such beast had escaped from any zoos - and as far as we know they never saw or caught it.(Cr: Frank Adey).

THE END OF A CAPER

In our experience, most escaped animals, certainly the larger ones, are caught or killed within a short period. Recently, a case of a clouded leopard which had survived 9 months in the fields of Kent surprised experts by surviving at all. It was shot by a farmer whose lambs it killed, having escaped from Howletts Park in August 1975. Daily Express 10 April 1976. Here are some other cases:

On 4 May 1975, a puma kept by a man in the Hampshire village of Medstead, broke away, terrifying neighbours who thought it was the infamous 'Surrey puma'. It was recaptured by police, using drugged darts, after only 4 hours freedom. Daily Mirror 5 May 1975. Police and dogs managed to recapture an escaped pet cougar at Blackley, Manchester - it too had only a 4hr taste of freedom. Bath Chronicle 27 Oct; Daily Mirror 28 October 1976. (Cr: John Michell).

3 lions escaped from a circus at Epsom, Surrey, but were captured after one savaged a horse. Daily Mirror 16 September 1976.(The previous year a lion attacked a boy at this circus - see News 14/8.) 3 lion cubs were recaptured at Stevenage, Herts. Sunday Express 26 September 1976. 6 lions escaped from a zoo at Ringgold, Georgia, 25 Oct -within a few hours 4 were shot (by police with machine guns), the other 2 on the 26th & 27th. (Newport News, Va) Daily Press 28 October 1976. (Cr: Gary Abbott.) A lion tasted 2 hours of freedom in Belfast on 13 Jan, hunted by dart firing police. The Sun 14 January 1977.



The summer of 1976 was a period abuzz with swarms; a bumper crop comparable to the vintage year of 1869, chronicled by Fort (Books, 741ff). A mild winter followed by a hot summer brought insect hordes to most of NW Europe as well as Britain, where the majority of our reports come from. Greatest of all the plagues were those of ladybirds, though many other insects also featured...including a wave of anonymous 'bugs' which invaded a rest room at Heathrow Airport: D.Mirror, 29 Sept 76 (Cr: K Rogers). We have a vast pile of clippings to contend with, so we hope to be forgiven if we run through them fairly briefly:

LADYBIRDS.

Westward Ho!, Devon: Ladybirds carpetted a two-mile beach in a thick, crawling mass. D.Mirror 3 July 76.

Deal, Kent: Millions of ladybirds invaded the beach, and then the town centre, shutting shops for half an hour. They were thought to have made a 20-mile channel crossing. S.Mirror 18 July 76.

Humberside & Lincolnshire: the same days as the above, millions of ladybirds swarmed over both counties. However, experts here thought the bugs indigenous rather than foreign; positing that the ladybirds swarmed together near the coast, flew out to sea, and then flew back across the coast elsewhere. The logic of this escapes me: but then I can't come to grips with the idea of even big tough ladybirds flying a 100 miles or more from the Continent to Humberside either. The swarms were blamed on a super-abundance of aphids, the ladybirds' food, although there seem to have been no reports of aphid swarms prior to the ladybird invasion. (Scunthorpe) Evening Telegraph 19 July 76. The same source also states that the East of England has a long history of ladybird invasions, going back to the 18th century. One of the most recent invasions was in 1952, when 40 miles of S.Lincolnshire coastline turned red under the little bugs.

3 days later, at Hessle, nr Hull, ladybirds stopped construction work on the new Humber bridge. Workers complained that ladybirds were getting inside their clothes and biting them, so they walked off the site. (Hartlepool) Mail, 23 July 76, BBC Radio Humberside, 22 July 76.

West Somerset: Ladybirds carpetting beaches, biting people, and apparently drowning themselves by the million in the Bristol Channel. Evening Standard 26 July 76.

South Coast: Millions of ladybirds descend on beaches at Brighton & Worthing. D.Mirror 28 July 76. Same source: a swarm of bloodsucking midges attacking women in Lochgoilhead, Argyll.

Mablethorpe, Lincs: the beach there got the red carpet treatment too. Leicester Mercury, 30 July 76.

Killingholme, Lincs: Ending of a strike by men at Refinery & General Engineers, which started after a plague of ladybirds made working conditions difficult. (Scunthorpe) Evening Telegraph 30 July 76.

More plagues at Hove, Sussex, and Bridgwater, Somerset. Evening Standard, 30 July 76. And at Hunstanton, and Great Yarmouth, Norfolk. Anglia ITV aprox 18 July 76.

D.Express, 7 Aug 76, ran a long article on the subject, noting also an increase in butterflies and other insect life at the same period. The majority of swarms consisted of the large 7-spot variety, and further swarms were reported from Chester-le-Street, Durham; Cheltenham, Glos; and all parts of East Anglia. In the biggest year for ladybirds since 1920, the little runts had by now eaten all the aphids, and were looking for new sources of food and

water...which included people, it seems.

The ladybirds were back at Hunstanton, Norfolk: D. Express 9 Aug 76. They were causing chaos on the beaches and in the streets of Skegness, too. Skegness Standard 11 Aug 76.

After this, apart from a late report in the D.Mirror 7 Nov 76, of a ladybird plague in Ainsdale, Lancs, 'during the summer', there are no further reports. Instead, a controversy broke out as to whether ladybirds literally bite, or sting by exuding an irritant from their knees. Observer 8 Aug 76, S.Times 15 Aug 76 New Scientist 28 Oct 76. The net result seems to have been that they do both...perhaps.

For a detailed study of ladybird populations, breeding cycles, the 'opportunism' that led to a preponderance of the 7-spot variety, etc, see Denis Owen's article in New Scientist 30 Sept 76, and correspondence in the 14 & 28 Oct 76 issues. (Crs: Paul Devereux, Judith Gee, Nigel Pennick, Ken Rogers, Paul Screeton, Nigel Watson, Ion Will).

ANTS.

Specialists had to be called to handle an invasion of ants at Mount Vernon Hospital, Northwood, Middx. D. Mirror 10 Oct 75.

Fire-ants stung their way across the southern states of the U.S.A in 75-76, causing at least one death in both Texas and Mississippi. In the year ending May 76, more than 12000 people needed treatment for stings. Animals were attacked, crops ruined, and fields neglected because workers refused to go near them. S. Express 16 May 76, Weekly News 29 May 76 (Cr. Nigel Watson).

BEETLES & COCKROACHES.

With a nice sense of irony, thousands of cockroaches invaded the Sutton Community Health Office (S. London). Eggs were believed to have lain dormant in the building for months, which then hatched when the health staff moved in and switched on the heating. Public health inspectors exterminated the little beasts. Evening News 15 March 76.

A breeding colony of 130 adult Colorado beetles were discovered at Ebbsfleet Farm, nr Minster, Thanet, Kent on 3 Sept 76; the first outbreak in Britain since 1952. The area was chemically treated, but most of the beetles were taken to the Plant Pathology lab at Harpenden Hertfordshire, where they were encouraged to breed...in order that new poisons could be tried out on them. Except for specimens destroyed at the docks, the beetle is almost unknown in this country. Times, 7 Sept 76, S. Times, 12 Sept 76. (Cr. Ken Rogers).

Cockroaches plagued St Catherine's Hospital, Birkenhead. Nurses threatened to boycott the 115-year-old former workhouse unless they were cleared. D. Mail 10 Feb 77. (Cr: P. Rogerson)

CATERPILLARS.

Havering, E. London, was plagued with Brown-Tail moth caterpillars in 1975, it seems. In order to stop a repetition of the same event, the local council were intending to wipe out the cocoons before they hatched. Evening News 26 Jan 76. Apparently they succeeded, for we have no further news...

Bentong, Malaysia: Hundreds of caterpillars swarmed over the walls, roofs and floors of the local court house, interrupting hearings until the place could be sprayed. Bangkok World 22 April 76 (Cr: Ion Will)

Originating from a 4-acre disused site, millions of furry caterpillars plagued people in Birchington, Kent. D.Express 29 May 76.

Thamesmead, Kent, suffered from hundreds of furry Brown-tail moth caterpillars (a separate outbreak to the nearby Havering case). Innumerable kids, unable to resist picking up the cute little devils, found themselves with skin irritations, swellings and rashes. Kentish Independent 3 June 76.

Hundreds of thousands of caterpillars of the 'common British moth' hatched at once in Powlett Road, Hartlepool. Within 2 hours, they had completely stripped a privet hedge, demolished a rose garden, and 'attacked' a nearby factory. Then they ran into a batch of insecticide. The hot weather was blamed for the outbreak; in normal summers, most of the eggs stay unhatched. The Mail (Hartlepool) 22 July 76 (Cr: Paul Screeton)

FLEAS.

Pewsey, Wilts: An invasion of cat fleas forced the town's three

policemen to vacate their station and work from a mobile HQ. The plague apparently originated when one of the policemen moved into a new house...which had formerly been occupied by a cat-lover. The Wilts Police Authority agreed to pay £860 compensation to the man for ruined furniture and fittings. D.Express 23 July 76, Reveille 13 Aug 76, D.Mirror 3 Sept 76.

The hot weather also brought a plague of fleas to Thanet, on the E. Kent coast. D.Mirror 2 Sept 76.

FLIES.

Plans to combat 1975's U.S. fruit-fly invasion, the most serious ever known in that country, ran into a slight hitch. The idea was to breed 4 million sterile flies, introduce them among the invaders, and then sit back and watch them die out. Unfortunately, someone packed the sterile flies in a container that had just been fitted with chemical fly-killer strips. Ooops! D.Mail 5 Nov 75.

Mild February weather brought millions of seaweed flies to the Portland naval base in Dorset. S.Express 8 Feb 76.

Hot weather and the importation of untreated cattle brought an infestation of warble flies to East Lincolnshire, causing ill-health, boils and ruined hides: to cows, that is, of course. (Scunthorpe) Evening Telegraph 4 Aug 76. (Cr: N Watson).

LOCUSTS & CRICKETS.

Aston-on-Trent, Derbyshire: swarms of crickets, originating on a rubbish tip outside the village, invaded homes and shops. The plague seems to have gone on for several days, before council workmen counter-attacked with sprays and repellants (Derby) Evening Telegraph 30 July 77. (Cr: K Rogers). D.Mirror 3 Aug 77.

Abundant rain in winter and spring 76 brought predictions of new locust plagues, in the 'locust belt' from Africa to Pakistan and India, after a decline in the insects for 15 yrs. New Scientist 12 Aug 76, Evening Standard, 8 Sept 76.

As Forteans, we're not surprised to find that our files contain no reports whatsoever from these areas. Instead, the locusts turned up in Australia, carried south on the wind from the desert area of the continent. Attacking on a 50-mile front, they ravaged the grain-producing Riverina area, and then descended on the city of Adelaide. Damage ran to millions of pounds as the malevolent munchers ate everything down to ground level. Troops, radar and helicopters were brought into fight the swarms, which were described as worse than the great locust plagues of the 1920s. S.Express 12 Dec 76, South China Morning Post 31 Dec 76, S.Express 6 Feb 77. (Cr: Ion Will, Peter Rogerson).

SCORPIONS.

A plague of scorpions drove people from their homes in a village near Kashan, Iran, making it too risky to sleep there at night. S.Express 1 Aug 76.

MARINE SWARMS.

Huge jellyfish, rhizotoma or 'Rootmouth' swarmed along the south and west coasts of Britain during the summer, apparently attracted by the warm weather. S.Express 1 Aug 76

And in Woolacombe and Ilfracombe, N Devon, scores of people were stung on beaches by common jellyfish. (Scunthorpe) Evening Telegraph 27 Aug 76 (Cr: N Watson)

A new genus of sponge, 3-4 feet tall and shaped like vases, are thriving in the pacific, just outside San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge. 47,500 barrels of radioactive waste were dumped in the area 25 years ago, and the plutonium content of the seabed is 25 times what was predicted. Robert S Dyer, discoverer of the sponges and an oceanographer, said he would 'have a hard time justifying' the idea of giant mutant sponges caused by the radioactivity. He must be the only one who would..! Houston Chronicle (Texas) 16 Sept 76 (Cr: Mark Hall).

Tiny shrimp-like creatures, Asellus Aquaticus, invaded the mains water supply of Newquay, Cornwall. They were 'harmless but undesirable', and were removed with pyrethin when the mains were flushed Press Association bulletin, 17 Nov 77 (Cr: Ken Rogers).

Steve Moore - February 1977.

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Next issue we hope to have some strange deaths of people and animals; the results of the recent worldwide psychic monster hunt; mystery holes; and some poltergeists; and more if we have room.

RAWS

Ken Campbell's play Illuminatus! is currently playing at the Cottesloe Theatre, in the National Theatre's London South Bank complex. By the time you get this (alas!) it will be in its last week there. Because the cycle of 5 subplays will be performed in sequence the whole performance lasts a bum-numbing 8½hrs with 3 intermissions, and can only be performed over the weekends. If the reviews are anything to go by you could witness an astounding and entertaining piece of innovative theatre. It begins at 2pm on 25/26/27 March, and tickets cost from £2.50 (that's for the whole cycle, remember.) The play was a hit in Liverpool and Amsterdam, and if we learn where it'll pop up next we'll let you know. To catch all its nuances I recommend you read the Illuminatus! trilogy by Robert Wilson and Robert Shea (available in paperback from Sphere (UK) and Dell (USA) - though Sphere haven't yet put out the 3rd volume and deserve a visit from the men from Swift Kick Inc.

Sourcebooks -- FT has made an arrangement with William Corliss for FT readers to order volumes of this essential reference series on Fortean sources and phenomena through us (also saves the fiddle of foreign money problems). The volumes published so far are: A1 - Strange Universe; B1 - Strange Life E1 - Strange Planet; G1, G2 - Strange Phenomena; M1, M2 - Strange Artifacts; P1 - Strange Mind -- each at £4.78. (inc surface postage from USA). Please make cheques payable to FT. For reviews of these volumes please refer to earlier issues of News/FT.

Dave Fideler, editor of ARB (see journal reviews), wrote saying how much he liked our 'Diary of a Mad Planet' feature (FT 18/8ff), and how much it echoed his own attempts at compiling an across-the-board chronology of Michigan phenomena. Extending the idea, he thinks that if Forteans on both sides of the Pond could cooperate we could compile a pretty meaty chronology each year. There is no doubt that if this could be accomplished, and published (as a supplement to FT?), it would be an invaluable research tool. We're not short of ideas or data, but man-hours. If you think such a project worth taking seriously, and are willing to put your energy where your brain is (!), please contact me at the FT address, or Dave, at 7098 Edinburgh, Lambertville, Michigan 48144,USA.

Reincarnation - a weekend conference is to be held on the subject by the College of Psychic Studies, from 1-3 April. For details of speakers, prices and accomodation write the College at 16 Queensberry Place, London SW7. It will be held at King Alfred's College, in Winchester.

We have heard from various sources that the long awaited UFO movie Close Encounters of the Third Kind may be released soon. The film stars Richard (Jaws) Dreyfuss and Francois Truffaut, is directed by Stephen Spielberg, and centres on contactee-problem in a small USA town. Being a big budget production we can certainly look forward to some good special effects. Its title suggests its writers are versed in the new UFOlogy - dare we hope for a thoughful and thoughtprovoking treatment? I hope so.

Also, the previously announced RILKO exhibition, Earth Mysteries, will be showing at the Acme Gallery, 43 Shelton St, London WC2, in the old Covent Garden area. It is an interesting blend of 'Lost Knowledge' - the stones, sacred geometry, etc of the Neolithic era - and modern skills in art and photography. This exciting synthesis works well, and I feel it significant that so many of the top researchers into the Earth Mysteries today should be quite accomplished artists as well. The whole subject lends itself to synthesis and

inspiration, and after all, who better to show us that there are other legitimate methods of interpreting the mysterious universe than those bounded by the confines of material science? For details of a book accompanying the exhibition please see the 'News' section last issue.

HARDBACKS

The Silbury Treasure by Michael Dames (Thames & Hudson 1976; £5.50; pp192; notes, bib, index, illos throughout) -- Dames maintains that after the rather simplistic view of Silbury Hill (in Wiltshire; the largest man-made mound in Europe) as merely a tomb-cover failed to be established by successive excavations the archeological establishment regarded it (if they had to regard it at all) with "total incomprehension".

Dames' own approach profits, in contrast, by being based on the techniques of modern comparative religion. His net is spread wide, gathering in to his central narrative of the history and effect of the site on men of curiosity, from the earliest writings down to the BBC 'Chronicle' dig of 1969, gems of information from the geography and antiquities of the surrounding area (beautifully illustrated with photos of the different 'moods' of Silbury); metrology; astronomical correlations; folklore and surviving customs (like corn dollies and harvest hills); and some etymology (eg an interesting derivation of the nearby river Kennet, supposed to rise up under the Hill, from the local name of River Cunnit (in use in Stukeley's day), almost certainly sharing the same root as 'cunt'(considered obscene since 1700 but arguably "a true language word of the oldest stock") punned into the name of another spring at Silbury's foot, the Swallowhead. The eye-vulva-mouth of hell are recognized attributes of the Great Mother.)

Dames patiently, and with insight, reconstructs the different roles of the monument in the Neolithic cosmology. It synthesizes the pregnant squatting/sitting goddess; the half-buried goddess; the eye goddess of supreme intelligence; the mountain/axis mundi emerging from the primordial waters; the cosmic egg; the sickle, grain and cornstook; the throne; the stag; umbilical snakes; mother and child; the androgynous woman with phallus; the spinning and weaving goddess - all of which have been enshrined throughout Europe, but which appear together at Silbury in a unique symbol of "awesome comprehensiveness."

We are left in little doubt that the spiritual and mythological value of this total symbol to the Neolithic world is the real Silbury treasure.

Earth Magic by Francis Hitching (Cassell 1976; £4.50; pp196; bib, index, illos throughout) -- Whereas Paul Screeton's Quicksilver Heritage argued for the existence of leys and 'ley energy', the wisdom of the ancient engineers, the megalithic monuments and their mysterious purposes and effects, from the stance of a believer, Hitching attempts here to examine both sides of the argument - and does it fairly, finding extremists on both sides relying on an untenable dogmatic faith in their own exclusive view - the other side being the orthodox teachings of the archeological establishment.

Hitching glides smoothly and clearly through some of the latest relevant controversies in modern archeology, still reeling from the double impact of radiocarbon dating methods (which demanded a radical reappraisal of the old dominant 'diffusionist' overview that culture spread out from Mesopotamia) and of the modern verifications of astronomical alignments embodied in megalithic monuments, which shows that our Neolithic ancestors were (as Prof Glyn Daniel has been forced reluctantly to admit) "not only skilled architects and builders, but had considerable mathematical and astronomical knowledge as well."

The first half of Earth Magic considers the many different kinds of old stones, tracks (straight & winding), hedges, ditches, moats, mounds and barrows; holed and rocking stones; petroglyphs and other markings; who were the British aborigines, and the Druids?; the astro-geometry of sites and the ley network which links them. The second half of the book looks at some of the more unconventional approaches to the past but which seem to promise considerable contributions, like dowsing and related theories of subtle energies; psychic and spiritual experiences in the vicinity of stones; the folklore of moving, growing and healing stones and the fairy-connexion (this tack is a bit thin, but admirably dealt with by Janet & Colin Bord in their recent The Secret Country); terrestrial zodiacs; and finally, Glastonbury and the link with the Arthurian tradition. In

most of these subjects Hitching finds more than enough food for serious thought, but the crucial question of the motivation of the ancients in erecting these artistic, functional, powerful, meaningful, magical monuments in the Neolithic landscape is only tasted in passing in the closing chapters; for a more satisfying meal try Dames' Silbury Treasure.

All in all, Earth Magic is one of the soundest introductions to and summaries of one of today's most exciting, vital, important and growing areas of study.

PAPERBACKS

Arigo: Surgeon of the Rusty Knife by John G Fuller (Panther 1977; 75p; pp253; bib, index,photos) - 'It is an established fact that Ze Arigo, the peasant Brazilian surgeon-healer, could cut through the flesh and viscera with an unclean kitchen- or pocket-knife and there would be no pain, no hemostasis - the tying off of blood vessels - and no need for stitches. It is a fact that he could stop the flow of blood with a sharp verbal command. It is a fact that there would be no ensuing infection, even though no antisepsis was used.'

So Fuller introduces his biography of the man, his healings and the legend that already surrounded him before he was killed in an automobile accident in 1971. Before this,his skills at psychic surgery and 'trance' diagnosis were thoroughly tested time and again by doctors and scientists, all of whom saw things with their own eyes and cameras that baffled them. There was no doubt that trickery was not involved in Arigo's case, nor that the cures were effective. Fuller also tells of Dr Henry K (Andrija) Puharich, who during his investigations submitted himself to Arigo's crude surgery, and shows photographic proof of the efficacy of the 'rusty knife'. Many case histories are given (as narrative) and we see the development of Arigo's clinic against the background of a fast rising Kardecist spiritualist movement and a crisis in the Catholic church.

Effective psychic surgery, like fire-walking, is one of the few non-ordinary types of phenomena that deal directly with physiological and physical realities, and suggests that at the interface (a la JC Pearce) the very structure of reality in being altered. Just what this metamorphic power is, and its method of intervention, remains one of the (perhaps the) greatest challenges to the inquiring spirit our universe has to offer.

Ghost Hunting by Andrew Green (Mayflower 1976; 60p; pp159) - Green gives us the benefit of his 25years experience as a ghost hunter in a comprehensive guide to techniques, experiments, equipment, site proceedure, interviewing witnesses, and the sorts of phenomena you might encounter. He also summarizes some theories, and gives a good list of useful addresses of societies and associations. The book will serve to introduce many new young minds to the subject and hopefully fire them enough to inquire for themselves.

Europe's Inner Demons by Norman Cohn (Paladin 1976; £1.75; pp302; bib-notes, index) - Prof Cohn continues his unique style of sociological history that brought us The Pursuit of the Millennium. Demons is concerned with society's persecution of minority religious groups, in particular the persecution of the witches and Knights-Templar drawing many surprising lessons from earlier history (eg the Roman persecution of embryo Christianity). It matters not to Cohn (indeed not to us) if there really were witches and magicians, night-hags, demons and devils - it was enough for the societies at the time to believe in them and that they thought they could see the devil's pointy tail dangling out from under the most innocent cloak of secrecy generated by any closed group. The early Christians were accused of precisely the same crimes (baby eating, sex orgies, incest, blood-drinking, etc) alleged against the witches, the Cathars, the Jews, and the new and immigrant religious groups in America. Although Cohn makes no judgements about the magical and mystical phenomena that were an integral part of the mythology of these pogroms, his book is essential reading for Forteans providing essential background to much of our historical data.

Apparition Phenomenon manifest at Zeitun, Egypt edited and published by Page Research Library: 6708 Colgate Ave, Cleveland, Ohio 44102, USA. (PRL 1975; pp44; $3.00 (inc postage)(I make that £1.74) - The PRL had done us all a great service by collecting the crucial data on the apparitions at Zeitun (1968-70), widely noised as a visitation of the Virgin Mary, angels and UFO-like 'doves' of light. Here is the testimony of the major witnesses (including some Muslims); the report of the patriarchs of the Coptic Church; miracles of healing; a summary of contemporary news reports; a list of key publications and promulgat-

ing organizations; plus 32 photos, many of them collected together for the first time. PRL *have let the enigma speak for itself without making it fit any pet theories - the only interpretations are obviously coloured by the religious views of the witnesses, but behind them the phenomenon can be clearly discerned, even if we ourselves don't know what to make of it. My only pecadillo (quite minor in an otherwise excellent and well illustrated booklet) is that it lacks an index.*

Mysterious Britain by Janet & Colin Bord (Paladin reprint 1977; £1.50; pp287; bib, index) - brief essays on a whole range of British mysteries (from hill figures, wells, mazes, leys, zodiax to King Arthur and UFOs) copiously illustrated with photos and engravings. A good introduction to earth mysteries.

The Natural History of the Vampire by Anthony Masters (Mayflower 1975; 60p; pp258; bib, index) - an excellent historical and pan-cultural compendium of vampire lore, tales, true cases and mythology.

Gods of Air & Darkness by Raymond Mooney (Panther 1977; 75p;pp190) - The same old Ancient Astronaut drum banged with just a little more style and consistancy than vonD himself.

Mysteries of the Ancients: Early Spacemen & the Mayas by E&C Umland (Panther 1976; 50p; pp175; bib, index) - quite possibly the most preposterous crap in the whole AA genre. 'Earth's most sinister secret' (as it says on the cover) is why anyone bothered to publish it in the first place.

Also received: The Meaning of the Loch Ness Monster by R Grimshaw & P Lester; and a new magazine The Zetetic -- both to be reviewed fully next issue.

JOURNALS

Anomaly Research Bulletin (ARB) No4- Michigan phenomena; report on Vestigia's New Jersey spook-light investigation; mystery animals; mutilations; a look at Arthur Clarke's ET contact concepts. $3.00/£1.50 (6 issues/year) to David Fideler: 7098 Edinburgh, Lambertville, Michigan 48144, USA.

Pursuit 36, Fall 1976 - The burning of Dr Bentley (abridged from Larry E Arnold's forthcoming definitive study of SHC); fossil tracks; prescription for *the 'New Science'; vampire cats?; mutilations; notes. $10.00 in USA (outside* USA sub increased to $12.50 - I make *that apx £7.25). Society for the Investigation of the Unexplained (SITU): Columbia, NJ 07832, USA. (4 issues/year).*

INFO Journal 21, Jan 1977 - Golden models of ancient spacecraft?; pyramid power & mummification; phantom butchers in Sweden; the Timberville ice-fall pt2; notes. International Fortean Organization (INFO): 7317 Baltimore Ave, College Park, MD 20740, USA. (6 issues/year) $10.00/£5.00. Joint sub with FT: $14.00 £7.00 (12 issues). Payable to FT or INFO

Fate - getting meatier each issue - Jan 77 - UFO car-napping in Rhodesia; phantom hitchhiker; a new reincarnation case; ancient stone fort in Georgia. Feb 77 - the 'Solar miracle' at Gibeon; do UFOs jinx satellites?; life after death?; Hamilton's great airship hoax; the vanishing of Col. Fawcett. Mar 77 - who wrote the Book of Mormon?; ghosts; a car teleported in time; psychic surgery; disappearance of a cargo ship and its subsequent sightings as a phantom derelict. Fate is now available on UK newsstands.

'Why I'm disturbed by astrology' by Prof. Hans Eysenck - a brave public statement by a scientist who (like many other eminent men before him) bothered to investigate for himself and came away with questions the orthodox view could not answer . (London) Evening Standard 2 March 1977.

Christian Parapsychologist Sept 1976 - psi & UFOlogy; difficulties of evidence for miracles at Lourdes; a parapsychology reading list by John Beloff; 2 early 'charismatic' movements; PK in eastern Europe;etc. CP (subs): 284 Earl's Court Rd, London SW5 9AS. $3.00/£1.00/year.

Argosy Dec 1976 - 'Bigfoot: man, beast or myth' by T Jeff Williams.

Science Aug 1976 - USAF hands Project Bluebook files of 12,618 UFO cases over to the National Archives. March 76- solar variability & its effects.

Scientific American Jan 76 - the volcanoes of Mars; 'Paleoneurology and the evolution of mind'; killer bees. Feb 76 - is gravity getting weaker? June 76 - historical records of supernovas. March 77 - the moons of Mars.

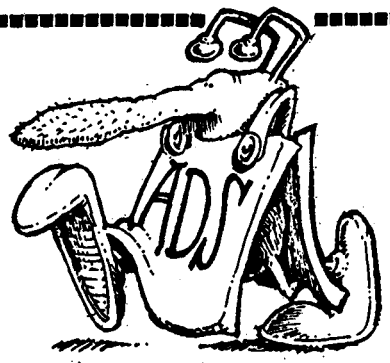
Institute of Geomantic Research, & Fenris-Wolf -- 2 new papers in the 'Megalithic Visions' series: no13 Regent's Park: Town-planning or geomancy?(30p); no14 Sacred Geometry - an introduction (35p). IGR Occasional Paper no7 Ludovic McLellan Mann: a forgotten researcher

(who seems to have discovered that certain groups of barrows on Salisbury Plain reflect stellar patterns). IGR have also published a fundamental book on the Nuthampstead and Pendle zodiacs, Terrestrial Zodiacs in Britain by Nigel Pennick & Robert Lord. There is no particular reason why neolithic British zodiacs should conform to the graphic designs familiar today; even so, one wonders, looking at some of the tortuous and obscure shapes illustrated in this study, if things (roads, edges of fields & woods etc) have not been imaginatively stretched a little to make something halfway recognisable. The authors of this professionally printed booklet, however, have an argument that should be listened to, backed with quite detailed data. Inquiries to IGR. Fenris-Wolf & IGR: both at: 142 Pheasant Rise, Bar Hill, Cambridge CB3 8SD, UK.

SOBEPS News - the valuable English summary of the Belgian Inforespace - pt4 of a study of Bermuda Triangle cases & books; history of ET communication attempts, like Project Ozma; possible UFO propulsion systems implied by latest magnetohydrodynamics (MHD) research; Poitiers conference; study of 10 Sept 74 when 10 UFOs appeared at Charleroi. Inquiries to : SOBEPS, Blvd Aristied Briand 26, 1070 Brussels, Belgium.

Awareness Winter 76 - orthoteny; Poitiers conference; new interviews in Apadoca, Mexico, contact case; UFO occupants - enquiries Contact (UK): 11 Cumnor Rd, Wooton, Boar's Hill, Oxford.

((Cr: Roger Waddington, D Baxter. If you see notes of possible interest to us and other readers please let us know.))



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Page Research Library - a dynamic and useful place to know. PRL is partly a large mail-order clearing house for books on Fortean phenomena, UFOs, religious phenomena, and related subjects. They also give lectures, run a shop, publish a very worthwhile newsletter, (and the Zeitun report - see pb reviews) and generally make themselves indespensible by being helpful and disseminating valuable up-to-date news. The Newsletter requires a subscription of $2.00 (UK subs are $3.00. - apx £1.74). The catalogue lists 100s of UFO and related books and is available for the writing. NB: if you publish a mag on a related topic PRL are happy to list you in their Newsletter, or maybe exchange with you. PRL: 6708 Colgate Ave, Cleveland, Ohio 44102, USA.

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